

WQA POSITION PAPER ON  
PRECIPITATION TESTS

WQA POSITION: There are two types of precipitation tests (demonstrations) used for in-home water analysis. The chemical precipitation test shows the formation of hardness precipitation, which can accumulate, in plumbing and on fabrics. The electronic precipitation tests use electrodes, which partially decompose when current flows through water that conducts electricity. Since the electric conductivity of water is rarely, if ever, a factor in water quality improvement, the Water Quality Association recommends against the use of the electronic (electrode) precipitation test as a means of demonstrating water quality.

SUMMARY: Precipitation tests (demonstrations) have been used for many years to demonstrate the hardness characteristics of water. The chemical precipitation test does demonstrate water hardness characteristics. While this test can be used to show whether water is hard, it should never be used to demonstrate that water is “polluted” or that it contains “dangerous” or health threatening contaminants.

On the other hand, the electronic precipitator test causes a release of metal ions into the water, which form a precipitant that is clearly visible in the water. The mere appearance of this precipitant in drinking water will lead the viewing consumer to question the quality of his or her drinking water, even though the presence of the precipitant has no relation to the water’s quality. Therefore, the likelihood is considerable that the use of this test will mislead the public.