



## DISCOLOURED WATER – REMOVING STAINS | FACT SHEET



### How to clean laundry stained with discoloured water

The staining of your laundry from discoloured water is due to particles of sediment lodged in the fabric. The stain usually only becomes permanent if the laundry is allowed to dry. It is, therefore, essential to keep stained laundry immersed in water and call Council for a cleaning kit. Do not use bleaching agents. They will only fix the stain and make it worse.

The staining is caused by iron and manganese. The stain is best removed by an acid-based cleaning agent. There are several commercial rust removers available in supermarkets which work quite well. Follow the instructions provided and always check for colour fastness before use. Alternatively, you can contact Council for a free cleaning kit which contains citric acid.

### How to use citric acid to remove stains

For best removal of stain it is important not to dry clothes. Keep the clothes soaking in water until you have obtained the cleaning kit. Cleaning powders included in your kit are two containers of citric acid. Please keep these away from children.

#### For Safety:

Citric acid is classified as a hazardous but non-dangerous good. It is commonly used as a weak acid in foods and beverages and can be purchased in supermarkets. However, this product should not be consumed.

The powders can cause irritation if they come into contact with skin or eyes or if they are accidentally swallowed. Wear rubber gloves when using the powder and avoid splashing the solution in eyes.

#### First aid measures:

**Swallowed** – do not induce vomiting. If vomiting occurs, lean patient forward or place on left side to maintain open airway and prevent aspiration. Observe patient carefully. Never give liquid to a person showing signs of reduced awareness or sleepy. Use water to rinse out mouth then provide liquid slowly. Seek medical advice.

**Eyes** – wash eye immediately with fresh running water. Ensure complete irrigation of the eye. If pain persists seek medical attention.

**Skin** – Immediately remove all contaminated clothing. Flush skin and hair in running water. Seek medical attention in the event of irritation.

**Inhaled** – If fumes or combustion products are inhaled, remove from contaminated area.

### Citric acid

For use with coloured and white laundry. Test coloured clothes for colourfastness before soaking in citric acid by applying the solution to a small, inconspicuous area of the fabric.

Use only in a small plastic bucket, not in washing machine or stainless steel tub as scouring may occur.

Mixing and soaking:

1. Dissolve contents of one container in a 10-litre bucket of water.
2. Soak clothes in the solution for two to 12 hours, or until stains are removed.
3. Rinse in clear water and rewash as normal.

For Best Results:

Agitate clothes regularly during soaking to get the best results. Rubbing stains will also help. The powders only work on stains caused by the discoloured water and will not remove other stains such as grease, blood or food items.

To dispose of the solution when finished, dilute with more water and flush down the drain while running the tap. Rinse clothes in fresh water to remove any residue and wash again as normal to remove any remaining dirt etc. Repeat the soaking procedure if necessary.



For further information phone Richmond Valley Council on (02) 6660 0300  
or visit [www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au).