



# Life of a Water Softener?

---

## Many people ask me ‘What is the life of a water softener’?

The answer is one that can be difficult to answer based on many different factors that can play a part in the life or lack of life in any system. Most quality softener resins were designed to last up to 25 years. Our experience in the field shows that resins can fail much faster. We had one client that had a fairly good quality unit fail within 4 months with no warranty on the resin! (Resins are of course the inside material of a softener.)

And life and quality of service are different subjects. We will be discussing FAILURE in this article!

## What are the Variable Factors?

- One of the simplest variables is the water coming into the softener.
- Another is the control valve or the settings.
- The salt tank and float system and salt levels.
- Quality of Resins.

## Water:

Although it would be easy to say, it’s just water! That would fall short of an explanation for why so many softeners fail so quickly when all the other factors are not a cause.

- Chlorine in water is one of the softeners biggest enemies. Chlorine impacts the resins causing them to soften and turn to a “jelly”. Some municipal systems are loading the water with chlorine to insure safe water. When we say safe here we are talking about Bacteria Free. Chlorine can cause damage to the seals of any softener causing premature failure to the units. If you are experiencing pressure reduction it can be due to the “jelly” condition of the resins.
- Iron and or Manganese or other natural occurring elements can be present in the water supply. Iron of course turns things red. These can coat the resin beads and cause them to fail. The regeneration settings would be vital here to help keep the resins free of buildup. The frequency of regeneration needed could be as soon as every day!
- Iron and sulfur bacteria. If your water source is in an area where the water has some Iron or Sulfur (usually some well waters), then a type of slimy bacteria can live on the Sulfur or Iron particles. Although not considered a health hazard it can lead to fouling of the bed. Here Pre-Treatment with chlorine would be advisable.
- Dirt or Sand and any other debris floating in the water can damage the control head or pistons causing improper regeneration or cleaning of the softener.

### **Control Head and settings:**

Equipment is more than the fancy packaging that some units come in. I am often impressed and surprised at the designs and colors of some water softening units only to find a poor system that won't last or that has failed prematurely or was inadequate for the home it was installed in.

Proper sizing, of the valves and proper settings for the water conditions like hardness are vital to a proper functioning unit and can extend the life of a softener. Purchasing a system from the internet or from a big box store may leave you with a system that won't last and more importantly not give you the best possible water because it was never set up correctly. A good Technician to test and set up your system should be part of the purchase decision. Proper setting and set up can definitely be part of the life of your water softening system.

### **Salt Tank, Floats and Drain lines:**

Although it looks like a simple item it can be the source of trouble and or premature failure to the unit. The float settings and check valves within the brine tank are a vital part of the properly functioning softening system. Improperly set floats can cause inadequate brine solutions needed for the cleaning or "regeneration" process. Some tanks we have seen have the improper sized float assemblies creating situations where the resins will never really clean. Like sucking a drink through a coffee stirrer, the unit never gets the needed resin regeneration.

Even the drains size and distance from the unit to the drain can cause premature failure and more importantly it can create a situation where the system has long past stopped giving you good quality performance because it didn't clean itself properly due to the back pressure created by the size or distance.

### **Quality of Resins:**

Resin media has many variables and not all resins are created equal and not all resins work on all applications. The quality of the resin is a vital part of the quality of the water coming through the tap and its life. Many systems purchased have very poor resins and the warranty to match. Usually none!

**So what is the life of a Softener?** I would sum this up in the following way; It depends on the quality of the unit and the proper design for the actual application and use. Purchase a softener system that fits the application or water and home that you are living in. The better the unit design the longer the life. The better the unit design the better the warranties. My favorite advice is to decide on the quality of the water you have coming out of the tap! The rest is mechanics, technology and price or payments. If dealing with a reputable company price should be the least concern. Quality of the output water should be first! Better units may be a bit higher at the beginning but in the long run they can be much less expensive and give much better or higher quality water output.

Too many times I visit homes and find that the original reason for purchasing a softener has not been realized by the homeowner. Mostly because they didn't really understand the mechanics, and technology of the units and they were sucked in to the color of the unit they purchased and the price. The age old saying of "you get what you paid for" is shockingly correct when it comes to water filtration and softening. Too many times clients have never gotten what they originally paid for. The service life ended a long time back and or was never realized.

We still recommend water Processors\* designed and sold through Purity Bay. They are the best designed systems on the market. They use only the highest quality materials and components. They give the best possible quality water and in the long run cost you the least. When you want the best possible protection to your home and for your family a Purity Bay system is just what you need. It is designed for today's complicated water!

**"Always decide on the following basis: What is the quality of the water I want coming out of my tap".**

We spend money on all kinds of items to improve or protect the quality of our lives and our family's lives. We set high standards for the clothes we wear and the televisions we watch. I find it fascinating that a person will not skimp on the expense of the car they drive or even the phone they use or the socks they wear. Yet, will attempt all fashion of explanation and justification for not doing the best job on the water they have in their homes!

**Dennis O'Brien**

**The good Water Guy**

***Call me if you want more information! 915-694-6159!***

***\*Processing of water is more than just softening. Processors are usually multi-staged multi-media units that offer better water output and are usually more economical in the long run with less salt use and less maintenance. The quality of a Purity Bay system is in the unique design and blend of the multi stages designed by a Level 6 Water Specialists and built by some of America's best factories using only high quality components to an exact specification to get the best possible water coming out of our taps!***

***"With Purity Bay financing options and monthly payments as low as \$59, it is the best possible way to get great water in any home!"***