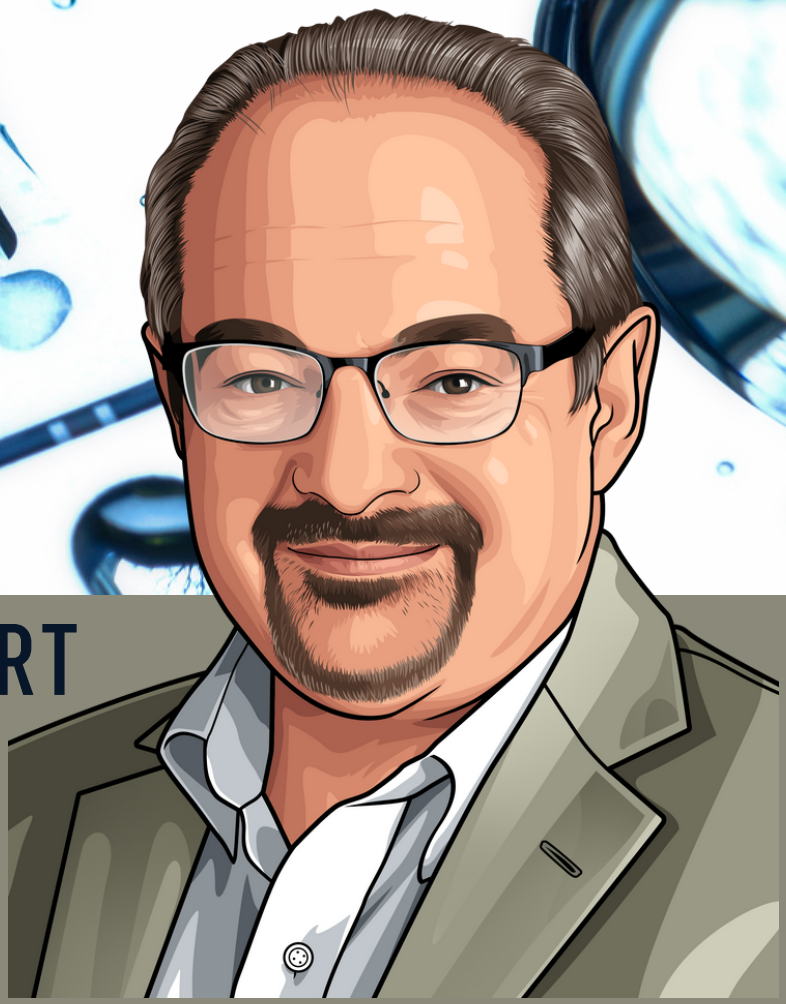
THE TWO MAJOR TYPES OF WATER USED IN STERILE PROCESSING



WATER QUALITY EXPERT

BEYOND CLEAN

Jonathan Wilder, Ph.D. | Managing Director
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Beyond Clean Water Quality Expert:

THE TWO MAJOR TYPES OF WATER USED IN STERILE PROCESSING

Jonathan Wilder, Ph.D. | Quality Processing Resource Group, LLC

You may have heard the terms "Utility" water and "Critical" water. Whatever happened to "tap" water and "treated" water? Those terms were not specific enough to define how best to process instruments in a Sterile Processing department. Tap water is supposed to meet the EPA drinking water standards. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. "Utility" water is what tap water is supposed to be, with specified ranges for a number of parameters. "Treated" water is a meaningless term. It can be tap water run through a sand filter to get the rocks out. It can be softened. It can be carbon filtered. It can be reverse osmosis/deionized (RODI). "Critical" water has specified maximum contaminant levels that establish a minimum purity level. So, what do you do with them? The applications are what matter and these are based upon recommendations and requirements in AAMI TIR34 "Water for Reprocessing of Medical Devices", ST79 and other standards and best practices. Detergents are designed to dissolve and clean well in utility water, although you may have to tailor your dose to match the specific parameters you have. Rinsing with it works well, too. But "works well" isn't good enough for medical devices for patient safety and instrument longevity. To finish the job, you need Critical water. Critical water has far lower contaminant levels, so it can dissolve residual mineral, detergent, and soil deposits that may remain on the instrument, finishing the job of making instruments clean, residue free and sterilizable. See you next month!

Have more water quality questions? Contact Jonathan at: jwilder@qprgllc.com

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Dr. Wilder joined MDT Corporation in 1990 as Staff R&D Scientist, tasked with executing process and product development in sterilization, disinfection and cleaning of reusable medical devices. He started H & W Technology in 1997 and allied with SMP Laboratories from Tübingen, Germany to form Quality Processing Resource Group (QPRG) in 2016. QPRG provides clients with operational, regulatory, and technical consulting in the area of sterile processing. Its services include accreditation readiness audits, technical deep dives into the issues causing wet loads and staining, and 510(k) filing support for manufacturers. He has a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from NYU and an MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology. He is a New Yorker by birth but escaped in 1986 to a postdoctoral fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for Surface Physics, the Fritz Haber Institute, in West Berlin, Germany. He is currently happily living near his children in Philadelphia, PA.

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