

# Hard Water and Dishwashers in Ottawa: Why Glasses Come Out Cloudy

*Quick reference guide by Max Appliances Ottawa*

## Test your water hardness

Ottawa River supply (downtown, central) = soft, 30-50 mg/L. Carp, Kanata, well water = hard, 150-350 mg/L. Buy \$10 hardness test strips at any hardware store.

## Limescale vs etching test

Drop white vinegar on a cloudy glass, wait 30 seconds, rinse. Cloudy disappears = limescale (fixable). Cloudy stays = etching (permanent, glass is dead).

## Fix 1 - Citric acid cycle

100g food-grade citric acid in dispenser + 100g in tub. Empty dishwasher. Longest hottest cycle. Repeat monthly on hard water.

## Fix 2 - Rinse aid

Fill the dispenser. Set the dial to 4 or 5 or 6. Top up every 2-3 weeks. Immediate visible improvement.

## Fix 3 - Premium detergent

Finish Quantum, Cascade Platinum, Method. They include water softeners. Budget detergents do not.

## Fix 4 - Water softener (permanent)

Whole-home softener: \$1,800-3,500 single tank, \$2,800-5,000 twin tank installed in Ottawa 2026. Pays for itself in 8-15 yrs.

## Spray arm cleaning

Twist off arms. Soak in white vinegar 30 min. Clear jet holes with a pin. Rinse the bottom filter under hot tap water.

## When to replace

Over 8 years + visible limescale on heating element + still cloudy after citric acid = replace. Used dishwashers Ottawa start at \$300 with warranty.

## Loading tip

Glasses inverted on the top rack only. Never let glasses touch each other or the rack tines. Plastic on top rack only.

## **Wash temperature matters**

Modern enzymes need 60-65C. A limescale-coated heating element loses 30-50% of heat transfer.

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