My Whole-House Carbon Owner Guide

The paper that lives at your carbon system: what your carbon is set up to take out, the settings exactly as your tech set them, how to tell when the media is spent, and what to check before you call. Print it, fill it in, keep it at the unit.

1. Your system — fill this in on install day

Installed on _____ **Installed by** _____

System / valve type _____

Carbon type (circle): standard carbon / catalytic carbon

Tank size _____ **Paired with a softener? Y / N** _____

Order in the line (circle): carbon first, then softener / carbon only

Bypass type _____ **House main shutoff is at** _____

Those last two lines matter. A whole-house carbon system sits where water enters the home, so every tap is downstream of it — knowing which valve bypasses it and which valve stops the house, before anything ever leaks, is the cheapest insurance in the house. This sheet records your system and your numbers. It does not describe the treatment process, and it does not need to: the record is what you, a future tech, or the next owner of the house actually uses.

What this setup costs, in the open: the softener plus carbon combination — hardness plus chlorine taste and odor — is the most common city-water setup Aqua Pro installs. A softener alone covers hardness only. This sheet carries no system prices on purpose, so it never goes stale at your unit: your exact price is the written quote you got after your free water test.

2. What your carbon is — and is not — doing

Whole-house filtration is a category, not a single product. Sediment, taste, odor, chlorine, iron, and sulfur all behave differently, and each one needs its own media. Your carbon has one job: the disinfectant the city puts in the water, and the taste and smell that come with it. It does not soften water, and it does not take out iron or sulfur — if your water needs those handled, they have their own equipment, sized from your water test.

City water has to carry a disinfectant all the way to your tap — that is what keeps it safe in the pipes. Around Tampa Bay that disinfectant is usually chloramine, which is chlorine bonded with ammonia. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) caps both chlorine and chloramine at 4.0 parts per million (ppm), measured as an annual average. In their own 2025 reports, the local systems ran close to that cap: Pinellas County Utilities at 3.8 ppm (about 95 percent of the limit), the City of Tampa at 3.6 ppm (about 90 percent), Pasco County Utilities at 3.44 ppm (about 86 percent), and the City of Clearwater at 3.18 ppm (about 80 percent). None of that is a violation — the disinfectant is there on purpose. You can taste it well below 4.0, and that taste is what your carbon is there to remove.

Why the type of carbon matters — chloramine is the stubborn one

Plain carbon does not take chloramine out reliably. Catalytic carbon does, if the tank gives it enough contact time — which is why the tank size and the carbon type written in section 1 were picked from your water test, not off a shelf. Chlorine is the other half of the story: it wears out softener resin faster than anything else in city water, so on a combined install the carbon goes in ahead of the softener and protects it. When the City of Tampa temporarily switched from chloramine to plain chlorine from September 14 to October 5, 2026, the city itself told customers who noticed a stronger taste or smell to consider using a carbon filter.

3. Your install-day numbers — from your own water test

A taste complaint a year from now means nothing without the starting point. On install day, the disinfectant reaching your house and the taste before and after the carbon get written down here:

Water source: city / well _____ **Disinfectant: chlorine / chloramine** _____

Disinfectant reading at tap _____ **Hardness (grains)** _____

Taste / smell before carbon (describe it) _____

Taste / smell after carbon (describe it) _____

Tested by, and date _____

That before-and-after pair is your baseline. Carbon does not fail all at once — it fades. When the taste starts creeping back toward the 'before' line, the media is telling you it is spent, whatever the calendar says.

4. Settings as set by your tech — then leave them there

Backwash runs (days / how often) _____ **At (time)** _____

Media in the tank _____

Media last changed _____ **Next media check due** _____

Flow the system was sized for _____ **House pressure at install** _____

Contact time is the whole game with chloramine: the water has to spend long enough in the tank for the catalytic carbon to do its work. That is set by the tank size and the backwash settings your tech wrote here. Changed settings are a quiet way for a carbon system to stop treating — if you think a setting needs to move, call first: (727) 342-0091. The system was also sized to protect your usable water pressure, so a pressure change is information, not something to live with (see section 5).

5. Warning signs — what coming back means

- Chlorine taste or smell returning at every tap: the first sign the media is spent. Check the 'next media check due' date in section 4, compare the taste to your install-day baseline in section 3, then call.
- Taste back at one tap only: that points at that tap or its own small filter, not the whole-house carbon — the whole house would taste the same.

- Water pressure dropping across the house: something upstream is loading up. Do not just live with it — pressure problems get more expensive, not less.
- The system backwashing at odd hours, running far too long, or not running at all: note the time and what you heard, then call.
- A city notice about a temporary disinfectant switch: expect a stronger taste or smell for a few weeks even with good carbon — Tampa's 2026 switch is the recent example. If it does not settle back after the city switches back, call.

> **IN CASE OF A LEAK — DO THESE THREE THINGS**
> 1. BYPASS FIRST. Put the system in bypass (type written in section 1). The leak stops being fed; the house still has water. 2. MAIN SHUTOFF SECOND. If water is still coming, turn off the house main (location written in section 1). 3. THEN CALL. Aqua Pro Services — (727) 342-0091. If it is not our unit, this still just saved your floor.

6. Your service log

Every visit, every media change, and every taste check that made you look at this sheet goes here — same rule as the settings card at a softener: we start from the record, not from memory.

Date	What was done

Sources: Aqua Pro whole-house filtration page (aquapro.services/whole-house-water-filtration/) for the disinfectant limit, the 2025 local water quality numbers, the catalytic carbon and contact-time notes, and the Tampa disinfectant switch. Your install-day numbers come from the test at your own tap.