

**Yemen WASH cluster**

**Ceramic water filter production protocols**

***Introduction***

Ceramic filters (also known as silver filters) are one of the most effective household water treatment options in the humanitarian context. The filter uses a fired ceramic filter treated with colloidal silver to eliminate harmful bacteria from drinking water.

The need for the WASH cluster to outline general ceramic filter production protocols arose partly due some local producers producing inferior products resulting in potential health concerns and related accountability issues as well as requests from non-technical staff within organizations including financial and procurement staff who did not know how to evaluate the different ceramic filters available on the market.

While there are no agreed upon or official international standards for ceramic filters as of yet, different organizations such as the Ceramic Water Filter Working Group, Potters For Peace and Potters Without Borders provide guidance and training on ceramic water filter production.

Finally, it should be noted that the WASH cluster does not endorse any specific company producing ceramic water filters. Moreover ceramic water filters are an open source technology available to any producer. The WASH cluster only recommends that WASH partners purchase high quality filters produced according to the production protocols of ceramic water filter experts which are outlined below.

***Ceramic water filter production protocols***

These general production protocols have been compiled by Potters Without Borders. It is recommended to purchase filters from an organization that has received training on the production and firing of ceramic water filters by industry experts and/or certified trainers. However, the minimum standards for an organization producing without the benefit of such training are:

* Be able to document steps in their production process (forming, firing and post firing operations)
* Show that filters have no evidence of carbon
* Show that filters are treated with colloidal silver and be able to substantiate this with records
* Show sequential numbering of filters (associated with documented flow test results) which allows filters to be followed in community
* Show written production records including indications of failures which are a normal part of process
* Show random microbiological challenge testing of filters  by an outside health monitoring agency

***Further information***

For further information the WASH cluster recommends contacting the producers to inquire about any training received and their production protocols and to visit their factories. One may also contact Potters Without Borders, the only international organization that has done ceramic water filter training in Yemen, for more information at: <http://potterswithoutborders.com/>

or their sister organization Potters for Peace:

<http://www.pottersforpeace.org/>

It should also be noted that the Ceramic Water Filter Working Group met in October 2013 at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (USA) and discussed the need to develop clear guidance notes on ceramic water filters for WASH officers to make informed choices. Therefore more guidance is expected to be produced in the near future.

***Final point***

The responsibility of accountability to beneficiaries through the provision of safe and effective means of water treatment is ultimately upon each organization working in the field. It is for this reason that the WASH cluster recommends organizations’ procurement/financial staff along with WASH experts to visit factories themselves when procuring ceramic filters to determine to the best of their ability if the product being sold is going to be effective when used by beneficiaries. Until factories or ceramic filters can be certified, there is nothing else we can do. Thank you for your concern.