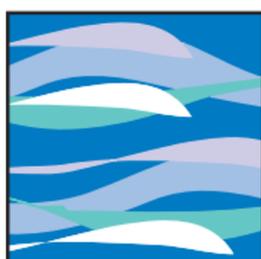
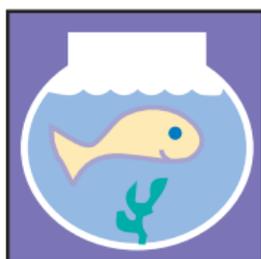




WATER QUALITY

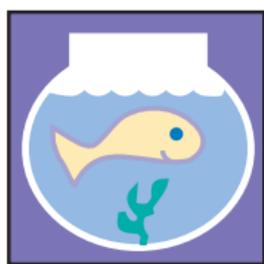


Santa Margarita
Water District



SMWD Delivers High-Quality Water

Santa Margarita Water District provides over 40,000 customers with clean and safe water daily. The District has a very thorough testing process to ensure that the highest quality of water is provided to every SMWD customer.



According to a national study conducted by the American Water Works Association Research Foundation, there is strong public interest in water quality. In an effort to address this interest, SMWD developed this brochure to provide its customers with facts and answers to important questions on water safety, testing and quality.

Water Quality Standards

SMWD is here to ensure safe and healthy high-quality water for you and your family. The water delivered in Orange County far exceeds the strict quality standards required by government regulations. With more than one-half billion gallons of water delivered every day to more than 2.8 million people in Orange County, the high quality of your water is a notable feat made possible by constant attention and advanced technology. New and continuously updated regulations will set even higher quality standards — and your water will continue to exceed them.

SMWD publishes an annual Consumer Confidence Report, previously known as the Water Quality Report, and distributes it to all customers to review the results of its annual tests. You can obtain a copy by contacting SMWD's Water Quality Laboratory at 949/493-6180, or view it on-line at www.smwd.com.

Frequently Asked Questions on Water Quality

Q. Where does Santa Margarita Water District's water come from?

- A. Essentially all domestic drinking water in SMWD's service area is purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and comes from two sources: the Colorado River Project, which brings water from the Colorado River to Lake Matthews in Riverside County, and the State Water Project, which is the largest aqueduct system in the world and brings water from Northern California. SMWD also has been successful in obtaining water from additional sources in the local area.

Q. How is the quality of our water monitored?

- A. The quality and safety of all drinking water in the United States is regulated by the federal government through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In California, the California Department of Health Services enforces those standards. Water imported from MWD is thoroughly tested before it reaches the District. In addition, every month SMWD tests a minimum of 132 samples from various locations throughout the District for water quality, bacteria content and chloramine levels. The District also tests all storage reservoirs on a weekly basis.



SMWD water is regulated at two priority levels:

First Priority (Primary Standards)

protects customers from substances in the water, such as regulated organic and inorganic

chemicals that may be harmful if consumed for long periods of time.

Second Priority (Secondary Standards)

ensures aesthetic qualities of water such as taste, odor or clarity, which influence customer acceptance of water but don't necessarily reflect the safety of water.

Q. What are chloramines and how are they used in the water treatment process?

- A. Chloramines play a vital role in assuring a safe water supply for customers. Instead of using chlorine alone, the District now uses chloramines, which are a combination of chlorine and ammonia, to disinfect water.

The current procedure of maintaining a measurable chloramine residual in your drinking water has continually proved itself to be effective and safe.

It is important to note that chloramines, even in small amounts, can be toxic to fish and must be removed from fish tank water. Most pet stores sell dechlorinating agents, that can be used for this process. In addition, water containing chloramines cannot be used in kidney dialysis machines without treatment, or come in direct contact with a person's bloodstream. However, your SMWD water is safe to drink and use for other purposes. If you have any questions about the use of chloramines in your water, please call SMWD's Water Quality Laboratory at 949/493-6180.



Q. What's being done to control Cryptosporidium in Orange County's water supply?

- A. Cryptosporidium is a potentially infectious microscopic organism, which has triggered headlines across the country. The chance of this organism being present in our water supply is extremely small. Cryptosporidium can be spread through contaminated food or water, or by direct contact with the feces of an infected person or animal, and can cause gastrointestinal illness. The chance of finding it in our water supply is low because MWD routinely tests its water and has found Cryptosporidium levels to be 100 to 1,000 times lower than those reported in other parts of the country.



While the general public is not at risk, Cryptosporidium can prove life-threatening to people with compromised immune systems — such as chemotherapy patients, organ and bone marrow recipients, or people infected with HIV or AIDS. As a precaution, people with these conditions should consult their doctor or health care provider about preventing infection from all potential sources. In addition, they may choose to purify their water by boiling it for five minutes before consumption.

Q. Should I be concerned about lead in the water system?

- A. The water produced by Southern California's local drinking water treatment plants is within federal regulations, which require less than 15 parts per billion (ppb) of lead in tap water (1 ppb is equivalent to a pinch of salt in 10 tons of potato chips). Southern California's water supply has continually tested far below the maximum.

Bottled or Tap?

Many people believe drinking bottled water is safer than drinking tap water. Bottled water and tap water are both required to meet the same state and federal drinking water standards. The presence of inorganic and organic compounds in Orange County's water is far less than the amounts allowed by the most stringent governmental standards. Your tap water is clean and safe.



All the benefits of SMWD tap water are available to you for an average monthly cost, which is a fraction of the cost of bottled water. So, the choice to use bottled water or a home filter system should be based on taste, odor or clarity — not fear of health concerns.



Santa Margarita Water District

26111 Antonio Pkwy., Las Flores, CA 92688

949.459.6400

www.smwd.com



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