

Frequently Asked Questions About Water Quality

It is important for you to know that we take our customers' concerns very seriously. We feel that you wouldn't be calling if there weren't cause for concern, so we investigate every claim fully and in a timely manner before closing a case. Below are some answers to the most common questions or concerns. FOR INFORMATION about this report or to report any concerns with the quality of water in your home or a perceived risk to the quality of our water source, PCWA customers are invited to contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.

Do we have hard water?

No, at less than 60 mg/L (milligrams per liter) PCWA water is considered soft water. General guidelines for classification of waters are: 0 to 60 mg/L as calcium carbonate is classified as soft; 61 to 120 mg/L as moderately hard; 121 to 180 mg/L as hard; and more than 180 mg/L as very hard.

Is there Fluoride in my water?

PCWA does not fluoridate its water. There is a very small portion of the City of Rocklin, which receives water from the City of Roseville during periods of high demand. In addition, our Bianchi system receives Roseville water at all times. Roseville is required to fluoridate its water. To find maps of these areas, you can go to:

<https://www.pcwa.net/services/water-quality>

My water smells like Chlorine!

Chlorine is required in the distribution system to keep bacteria from making it to your tap. We regulate our Chlorine dosage very strictly so that we have just enough without having too much. The maximum level for Chlorine is 4 mg/L (milligrams per liter), and a common level for our systems is between 0.5 and 1 mg/L. Some people are more sensitive to the smell of Chlorine in water. It is common for people to think that the level of the Chlorine must be too high under these circumstances; however, we've found that the most common reason for smelling Chlorine at your tap is when the Chlorine is dissipating or the level is dropping. The reason for this is that the water sits in your plumbing before you use it. Most likely, if you flush your taps out, the smell will disappear.

Why is my tap water milky or cloudy?

This is caused by tiny air bubbles in the water. It is completely harmless. Cold water from snowmelt has the potential to hold lots of air. As the water warms a bit on its way to your tap, it has more potential to release that air.

When you turn on your tap, the rapid reduction in pressure causes the air to come out of solution, and creates the milky look you see. If this is the case, it will clear before your eyes as in the picture.



How do I know my water is safe?

Distribution operators and treatment plant operators certified by the State Water Resources Control Board collect hundreds of bacteriological samples each year throughout the water distribution systems as well as performing thousands of individual tests in the treatment facilities and in the distribution system, of which the only the detected constituents are found in your annual Consumer Confidence Report. Field tests for things like temperature, turbidity, pH and chlorine residual help to let us know that our water is maintaining its quality throughout the distribution system.

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My water is dirty!

It is actually very common for people to experience discolored or “dirty” water at their tap. In most cases, we can trace this condition to a particular aspect of the household plumbing. It is very common for a water heater to corrode or rust and cause discolored water in the hot water. You



can test this by turning your tap to the full hot position and observe whether the water is discolored. If the water is discolored in your hot water, but not cold, you can be reasonably certain the issue lies in your water heater. If the problem occurs in the cold water as well, and doesn't clear up

after running for a few minutes, we may need to flush the main line. If you get discolored water out of your cold water tap and it clears up after running for several minutes, the main line is likely clean and you may have a plumbing fixture or an old galvanized line causing the problem.



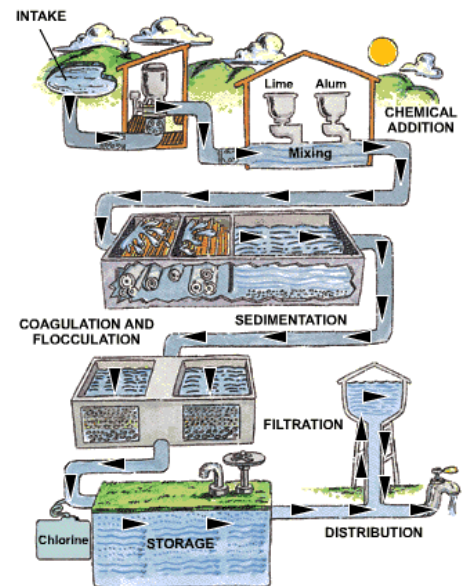
My water tastes like chemicals!

Another common call we get is that the water has a strong chemically taste all of a sudden. Most times, this can be traced to the either the Chlorine topic covered earlier, or to a hose bib being left on. This is most common during warm times of year when the hot sun beats down on a pressurized hose and creates backpressure. When you open a tap inside the house, you can be sure that high pressure hose water feeds right into your house, and it doesn't taste good. The best way to avoid this is to always shut your hose off at the hose bib shut-off valve, and depressurize your hose. For this reason, it is not a good idea to have your hose bib set up as it is in the picture.



How is my water treated?

Your water is treated by conventional methods, utilizing coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, and finally disinfection. The facility or facilities serving your area are operated by State Water Resources Control Board certified operators. It may also be comforting for you to know that our facilities have built-in fail-safes which will immediately shut the treatment process down and not allow any water to the system if something within the facility is not operating correctly. The operators receive alarms for immediate intervention so they can begin treating water again.



Why are there pink or dark stains in my toilet or around my drains?

There are numerous bacteria, fungi, and other organisms in the environment that find their way onto bathroom and kitchen fixtures. Most are not pathogenic (disease causing). They are found in soil, food, and on animals, and they may become airborne because of construction or wind. Some thrive on moisture and need little else to grow. They may be noticed at the water line in toilet bowls or toilet tanks, on faucets, in sinks, or on shower tiles. They sometimes appear jelly-like and are grey, black, or even pink in color. The pink-colored one is interesting and often gets the attention of the customer. This is most likely from the bacteria *Serratia marcescens* and is from the environment, not the water supply. Room or whole-house humidifiers can be the source of airborne bacteria. Regular cleaning, periodic disinfection with household bleach or cleaner, and adequate ventilation are necessary to control these organisms.



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Contaminants of Emerging Concern

PCWA has been receiving more questions as of late regarding some contaminants which are currently moving through the regulatory process, but aren't yet regulated.

What are PFAS chemicals?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of more than 12,000 human-made substances that are not naturally occurring and are resistant to heat, water, and oil. These chemicals have been used and produced extensively in the United States for both commercial and industrial purposes, as well as for emergency fire response. Due to their unique chemistry, PFAS have been widely used as surface coatings and protectant formulations in consumer goods such as carpet and home textiles; clothing; food packaging; and non-stick cookware. PFAS have also been used as a surfactant in chrome plating, firefighting foam, and other industrial applications. In typical conditions, PFAS are resistant to degradation and do not break down in the environment. These substances can accumulate within the human body and are toxic at relatively low concentrations.

Is PCWA monitoring for them?

Yes! The 5th Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR5) is currently underway. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires that the EPA establish requirements for public water systems (PWSs) to monitor for priority unregulated contaminants every five years. PCWA is required to test at 4 of our treatment facilities, representing the water in our area. PCWA has found no detections in samples collected thus far in our treated surface water. This latest round of testing for PFAS chemicals is not the first time we've tested for them, but it is much more comprehensive and detection levels are far more sensitive than previous testing. UCMR3 also required testing for some PFAS chemicals, and we found no detections during that testing either.



Contaminants of Emerging Concern

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What are Microplastics?

'Microplastics in Drinking Water' are defined as solid polymeric materials to which chemical additives or other substances may have been added, which are particles which have at least two dimensions that are greater than 1 and less than 5,000 micrometers (μm). Polymers that are derived in nature that have not been chemically modified (other than by hydrolysis) are excluded. Evidence concerning the toxicity and exposure of humans to microplastics is in early stages of understanding and rapidly evolving, and the proposed definition of 'Microplastics in Drinking Water' is subject to change in response to new information. The definition may also change in response to advances in analytical techniques and/or the standardization of analytical methods.

Microplastics can come from a variety of sources including larger plastic pieces that have broken apart, resin pellets used for plastic manufacturing, or in the form of microbeads, which are small, manufactured plastic beads used in health and beauty products.

Is PCWA monitoring for them?

Not yet. Just as the understanding of the health effects of microplastics is still developing, the testing methods are still being developed and refined as well. We do expect further direction regarding the testing of microplastics in the not too distant future. Stay tuned!