Our Water Quality ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Our Water Quality

WE ARE PROUD to have one of the nation’s highest quality waters that exceed all state and federal standards for drinking water.

Where Our Water Comes From

Over 80% of the water we purchased in 2013 from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPU/C) comes from high mountain snowmelt flowing down the Tuolumne River to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. The remaining SFPU/C water supply comes through water supply contracts with the State Water Resources Control Board and the American States Water Company. To ensure the purity of the treated water from the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir.

Our Drinking Water Sources

The source of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include river, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. For the regional water systems operated by the SFPU/C, the major source water originates from snow in the Sierra Nevada. Flooding down the Tuolumne River to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, where it is stored.

Palo Altos Water Sources

The source water source is located in the protected Sierra and meets all federal and state criteria for water quality and treatment. Based on the SFPU/C distribution treatment processes, extensive water quality monitoring and high standard operations, the State has granted the Hetch Hetchy water source a Class I exemption.

Palo Alto Emergency Water Supply Project Update

In 1999, the City Council approved a plan for providing Palo Alto with an emergency water supply in the event of a regional water system failure. CPAPU began implementing a long term environmentally sound water supply program. The regional water systems are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production and mining activities. These activities can generate radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Such radioactive contaminants are called contaminants. Drinking water, including bottled water, may contain at least some amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk.

Prevent Yourself from becoming ill

In order to provide a safe and healthy drinking water for all our customers, we want to thank you for understanding the importance of buying bottled water, and enjoy a glass of tap water today.

Protecting Our Watershed

The SFPU/C actively and aggressively protects the natural water resources entrusted to its care. Its annual Health Report lists the health conditions, water quality, potential contamination sources, and contaminant concentrations which ensure that the treated water systems is free of harmful contaminants. If a violative condition is found, the SFPU/C eliminates the condition and will ensure that the treated water system meets all state and federal drinking water standards. It is important to maintain production in the event of a natural disaster such as a major earth quake and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and agricultural application and appletic systems.

Protecting Our Watershed

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Ensuring the Highest Water Quality

The SFPU/C Water Quality Division regularly collects and analyses water samples from reservoirs and designated wells to ensure that the treated water meets or exceeds state and federal drinking water standards. 

The State of California mandates that an Annual Water Quality Report available to you and their report is prepared according to Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.

For More Information

For More Information important information about your drinking water and our commitment to providing excellence in water quality.

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Key Water Quality Terms

Following are definitions of key terms noted on the adjacent water quality data table. These terms refer to the standards and goals for water quality described below:

PUBLIC HEALTH GOAL (PHG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs are set by the U.S. EPA.

MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL GOAL (MCLG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the U.S. EPA.

MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that this level of the contaminant in drinking water is likely to pose a risk to health. MCLs are set by the U.S. EPA.

MAXIMUM RESIDUAL DISINFECTANT LEVEL GOAL (MRDLG): The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

MAXIMUM RESIDUAL DISINFECTANT LEVEL (MRDL): The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that this level of the disinfectant is likely to pose a risk to health. MRDLs are set by the U.S. EPA.

REGULATORY ACTION LEVEL: The concentration of a contaminant, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

The table contains the name of each contaminant, the applicable drinking water standards or regulatory action levels, the ideal goals for public health, the amount detected in water, the typical contaminant source, and footnotes explaining the findings. The State allows the SFPUC to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because their concentrations do not change. For certain other contaminants that were absent in the 2013 water supply and on many years of monitoring, the State allows the SFPUC to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because their concentrations do not change. For certain other contaminants that were absent in the 2013 water supply and on many years of monitoring, the State allows the SFPUC to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because their concentrations do not change. For certain other contaminants that were absent in the 2013 water supply and on many years of monitoring, the State allows the SFPUC to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because their concentrations do not change.