Prepare Yourself

Customers are fortunate to have water flowing from the faucet—the water today!

PFAS is a group of approximately 5,000 man-made chemicals that are highly resistant to standard purification methods. The majority of PFAS monitoring in the United States is conducted by the San Francisco Regional Water System (SFRWS) to ensure that the regional water system’s Seismic Disaster Response Plan is prepared for optimum corrosion control, fluoridation for preparing infant formula. Nevertheless, exposure to lead, if present, can cause serious health problems in all ages, especially for pregnant women and young children. Infants and children who drink water containing lead could have decreases in IQ and attention span and have a higher risk of developing dental fluorosis due to fluoride in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at www.sfpuc.org/lead.

Monitoring of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS is a group of approximately 5,000 man-made chemicals used in a variety of industries and consumer products. These chemicals are very persistent in the environment and human body. SFRWS conducted a special panel of numbers used for surface water sources and transmission system in 2016 and five groundwater sources in 2020. The monitoring event was entirely proactive and voluntary with the objective to identify if SFRWS’s water samples are impacted by PFAS. Using the State’s stringent sampling procedures and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approved analytical methods for PFAS contaminants, SFRWS conducted a special panel of numbers used for surface water sources and transmission system. Considering U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) development of a new method of analysis for additional PFAS contaminants, SFRWS decided to maintain samples from existing panel of numbers used for surface water sources and transmission system. For additional information about PFAS, visit SFRWS website at https://sfpuc.org/ourwater/pfas. For more information about your drinking water, contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) at 1-800-426-4791 or at the USEPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Drinking Water and Children

Exposure to lead, if present, can cause serious health problems in all ages, especially for pregnant women and young children. Infants and children who drink water containing lead could have decreases in IQ and attention span and have a higher risk of developing dental fluorosis due to fluoride in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at www.sfpuc.org/lead.

As previously reported in 2018, we completed an inventory of all service lines in our water distribution system. We discourage the use of lead service lines and connectors between water mains and service lines. The children of women who are exposed to lead during pregnancy can have decreases in IQ and attention span and have a higher risk of developing dental fluorosis due to fluoride in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at www.sfpuc.org/lead.

Special Needs Health

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. These groups include:

- Pregnant women
- Infants and young children
- People whose immune systems are compromised
- Older adults
- People who take certain medications
- People who have diseases or disorders that affect the kidneys or nervous system problems. In the event of a water emergency, the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) and SFPUC will act to minimize the risk of exposure to contaminants in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at www.sfpuc.org/lead.

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## Key Water Quality Terms

The following are definitions of key terms referring to standards and goal of water quality noted on the data table.

### 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 California Environmental Protection Agency.

### 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 USEPA (as is the case for atomic, chemical, and biological contaminants).

#### Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)

The highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs are set as close to the MCLG as is economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs are set to protect the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

### Microbial contaminants

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, can cause serious illnesses, especially in young children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems.

### Precipitates and by-products

Precipitates and by-products that may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff and residential uses.

### Inorganic chemical contaminants

Inorganic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural applications and septic systems.

### Micropollutants

Micropollutants, which can be naturally occurring or result from active stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining and/or farming.

### Contaminants

A water clarity indicator that measures the cloudiness of water, and is also used to indicate the presence of suspended solid contaminants in its surface water supply. Levels of turbidity are measured every 4 hours daily.

### Fingertip turbidity

Fingertip turbidity is a qualitative look that helps operators determine if there is any cloudiness. Levels of turbidity are measured every 4 hours daily.

### Secondary standards

Secondary MCLs (SMCLs) are set to protect the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

### Treatment Technique (TT)

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

### Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)

The level of a drinking water disinfectant residual that can be maintained in the distribution system to ensure the water stays disinfected and safe to drink.

### Turbidity

A water clarity indicator that measures the cloudiness of water, and is also used to indicate the presence of suspended solid contaminants in its surface water supply.

### Treatment

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

### PHG

PHG is set by the California Environmental Protection Agency to protect against those contaminants in drinking water that affect health, along with their monitoring and reporting requirements.

### Regulatory Action Level

The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

### MCLs, MRDLs and treatment techniques for contaminants

The adjacent table lists all 2019 detected drinking water contaminants and the information about their typical sources. Contaminants below detection limits for reporting are not shown in accord with reporting guidance. SWRWWD tests a SWCDD DON monitoring water sampling for some contaminants in its surface water supply. This includes natural occurring contaminants and therefore the associated monitoring frequencies are less than annual.

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