

## WATER TOPICS IN OUR COMMUNITY: WATER QUALITY

### HOW CLEAN IS TMWA'S WATER?

Thanks to sources of high-quality water, skilled staff, and efficient water treatment facilities, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) provides some of the best quality water in the nation. We go to great lengths to ensure your tap water is safe, clean and reliable.

### WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF OUR WATER?

Most of our drinking water comes from the Truckee River, which originates at Lake Tahoe and is fed by snow melt and rain throughout the Tahoe and Truckee River basins in the Sierra Nevada. The remainder comes from more than 90 wells drilled in deep-water aquifers located within TMWA's service area. TMWA also has a small number of satellite water systems that are fed exclusively by ground water.

### WHY IS PROTECTING THE TRUCKEE RIVER IMPORTANT?

As the major source of our water supply, the Truckee River's environmental health can directly impact human health. Preventing pollution is far less expensive than spending money on water treatment. Protecting this remarkable jewel in our semi-arid region benefits the water supply as well as fish and wildlife habitat and recreation.

### ARE TMWA'S WATER SYSTEM FACILITIES UP TO DATE?

Yes. Two top-notch treatment facilities serve TMWA customers: the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant in northwest Reno and the Glendale Water Treatment Plant in Sparks. TMWA is also committed to ensuring future water quality by continually improving our entire water system, both treatment and distribution facilities. Over the past ten years, we have spent more than \$200 million on repairing and rehabilitating aging infrastructure. Our facilities and capital improvement plan calls for monies to be spent every year to improve aging water mains and facilities.

### HOW DOES TMWA ENSURE OUR WATER IS SAFE?

Water treated by TMWA meets all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, and Washoe County Health District water quality standards. In most cases, our water is significantly better than these standards require. TMWA's professional staff of engineers, chemists, microbiologists and operators continually monitors our water quality. More than 1,000 laboratory tests are performed each month on over 180 samples taken from various locations within the TMWA distribution system. Testing is performed both at the treatment plants and throughout the distribution system to make sure high-quality water is delivered to our customers.

### DID YOU KNOW?

TMWA performs more than 1,000 tests on your drinking water each month.

In the United States, water utilities monitor for more than 100 contaminants and must meet close to 90 regulations for water safety and quality. These standards are among the world's most stringent (American Water Works Association, AWWA).

Tap water undergoes more frequent testing than bottled water (AWWA). Fill up a reusable bottle with tap water- not only is it high in quality, it costs significantly less than bottled water and is environmentally friendly.

**If you have additional questions about water quality, please contact our Water Quality Department at (775) 834- 8118 or at [waterquality@tmwa.com](mailto:waterquality@tmwa.com).**

### TMWA'S CHALK BLUFF WATER TREATMENT PLANT IS AMONG THE NATIONS BEST

TMWA has received the "Directors Award of Recognition" from the Partnership for Safe Water. With this award, TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant's quality is recognized as ranking among the top two percent of water treatment plants in the country, producing high quality water for more than 385,000 residents in the Reno-Sparks area.

### TMWA WATER QUALITY LAB RECOGNIZED FOR "OUTSTANDING ANALYTICAL EXCELLENCE!"

TMWA's Water Quality team has been certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to run Method 1623.1, a process for analyzing for Giardia and Cryptosporidium. With this certification, the TMWA Water Quality Laboratory one of 44 in the country listed by the EPA as able to perform this updated method.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WATER QUALITY

### WHO REGULATES OUR DRINKING WATER?

To ensure tap water is safe to drink, the EPA develops and sets regulatory standards that limit the amount of contaminants in public water supplies. These water-quality standards are among the world's most stringent, requiring water utilities to monitor for more than 100 contaminants. The EPA's standards are enforced by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the Washoe County Health District.

### IS IT TRUE THAT THERE IS CHLORINE IN OUR WATER? IS CHLORINE SAFE?

Since the 1800s chlorine has been used in the United States to safely and effectively disinfect drinking water. Chlorine prohibits microbiological activity and prevents disease-causing organisms from multiplying. Today, most utilities use chlorine to disinfect drinking water, under the regulation of the EPA. Studies indicate that chlorine is a safe and effective disinfectant for drinking water and TMWA keeps the chlorine dosage as low as possible while continuing to maintain adequate disinfection. Consult with your physician if you are immunosuppressed due to cancer treatment, organ transplant, HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders regarding drinking tap water and what is best for you. If you don't care for the taste of tap water, try a drop of lemon juice or leave your water in an open pitcher before drinking.

### HOW DOES TMWA TAP WATER COMPARE TO BOTTLED WATER?

Tap water is every bit as safe as bottled water. In fact, it's tested more, according to the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The cost difference between tap water and bottled water is also significant. TMWA charges less than \$2.00 per 1,000 gallons of treated water (first-tier residential rate), while a liter of bottled water costing roughly \$1 which equates to \$3,780 for 1,000 gallons of bottled water. Fill up a reusable bottle with tap water to save money and help the environment by reusing containers instead of disposing of them.

### SOMETIMES MY WATER IS CLOUDY OR MILKY WHEN IT FIRST COMES OUT OF THE FAUCET, WHAT CAUSES THIS AND IS IT SAFE TO DRINK?

Cloudy or milky water is caused by tiny air bubbles which becomes entrapped in the water, the bubbles will rise to the top and no longer be visible. This type of cloudiness can happen more in the winter, when the drinking water is cold, holds more air and is heated up in the plumbing. While it might be unappealing to the eye it is safe to drink.

### I THINK MY WATER IS HARD, IS IT SAFE TO DRINK?

Hardness of water does not affect the safety or quality of your tap water, but is a personal preference. Hardness is caused by calcium and magnesium, two naturally-occurring minerals in water. The best way to determine your water hardness is to check TMWA's website at [www.tmwa.com/wqlookup](http://www.tmwa.com/wqlookup). Click on your general location and you'll see the most recent water quality data for your area, including hardness. You can also call our Water Quality Department at **(775) 834-8118** or email [waterquality@tmwa.com](mailto:waterquality@tmwa.com).

### DOES TMWA ADD FLUORIDE TO OUR WATER?

No. Fluoride is not added to your drinking water.

### IS TETRACHLOROETHYLENE (PCE) AN ISSUE IN THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS?

Tetrachloroethylene or PCE is a chemical that can be discharged from factories and dry cleaners. If not handled properly by these industries, it can leach into underground drinking water supplies. PCE is not found in the Truckee River, which supplies most of our region's drinking water. Currently, five well sites employ a treatment process where PCE is removed to a non-detectable level prior to entering our water system. The cost for PCE removal is not reflected on TMWA bills, but is paid for by the Central Truckee Meadows Remediation District via property tax bills.

### About TMWA:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 385,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

### About this series:

"Water Topics in Our Community" is a series of papers designed to provide the citizens of the Truckee Meadows information about key water topics in this region.

To access all of the papers, go to [www.tmwa.com/topics](http://www.tmwa.com/topics).

### About TMWA's Board of Directors:

The TMWA Board welcomes you to attend and comment at any board meeting. Meeting schedules are posted at

[www.tmwa.com/meetings](http://www.tmwa.com/meetings).

To send a question to the Board, visit us online at

[www.tmwa.com/comment](http://www.tmwa.com/comment).

### Questions or feedback?

We'd like to hear from you. Please call our Community Communications line with any remaining questions you have on this topic or other water topics. The number is

**(775) 834-8290.**

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