

# Chromium-6 Factsheet

## **What is changing?**

On April 15, the California Department of Public Health announced the first Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for chromium-6 in the nation at 10 parts per billion (ppb). The current federal MCL for total chromium, or all types of chromium combined, is 100 ppb. California's total chromium MCL is 50 ppb.

The new MCL is set to go into effect July 1, 2014.

## **What is an MCL and why is it being established?**

An MCL is an enforceable regulatory standard for drinking water set by the California Department of Public Health. Most of today's MCLs are measured in parts per billion (ppb), which equals about one drop in 10,000 gallons. It is a maximum level for a contaminant in drinking water that public health officials believe protects public health and is feasible for water agencies to attain.

## **How much chromium-6 is in our water?**

Naturally-occurring groundwater levels of chromium-6 in Coachella Valley Water District's service area average 9 ppb and range from non-detect to 21 ppb. The Colorado River water that is used to replenish the valley's aquifer has no detectable chromium-6.

## **Why is chromium-6 a concern?**

Health risk information can be found on the CalEPA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) website at [oehha.org/public\\_info/facts/Cr6facts072711.html](http://oehha.org/public_info/facts/Cr6facts072711.html)

## **Is it safe to drink my tap water?**

Yes, your tap water can still be used for drinking, cooking, and all other needs. Chromium-6 is being regulated by the state for potential health impacts after many years of consumption, not any immediate health risks. It is our mission to provide safe, reliable drinking water and the district is working to comply with the new MCL as soon as possible. CVWD board members, staff, and their families confidently drink our tap water every day.

## **How can my water be treated to remove chromium-6?**

Treatment technologies for lowering chromium-6 levels in drinking water have advanced in recent years, although all these procedures are expensive. CVWD is a leader in testing these technologies locally and is already developing a plan to comply with the new MCL.



**What will the impacts be on CVWD customers?**

In addition to higher water bills, customers can expect several years of construction throughout CVWD's service area in order to build the facilities needed to comply with the MCL. This will be the most costly public infrastructure project in the history of the Coachella Valley.

**Where can I find more information on the quality of my water?**

CVWD began sampling for chromium-6 in 2001 and reports the results of this monitoring in its annual Water Quality Report found at [cvwd.org/waterquality](http://cvwd.org/waterquality). CVWD's website, [cvwd.org](http://cvwd.org), also has information on chromium-6 and water quality.

**What happens next with the MCL and compliance?**

CVWD must complete several ongoing studies with the Water Research Foundation and prepare a compliance plan using the most cost-effective chromium-6 removal technique(s). CVWD will share this plan publicly and allow ratepayers the opportunity to consider the cost impact to comply with this new MCL.

Since the regulation does not provide time to install facilities before determining compliance, CVWD will not be compliant with the MCL when it goes into effect. We will work diligently to meet the new MCL as soon as possible.

**What other regulations may impact the cost of water in the future?**

As detection and treatment technology evolves, so will drinking water standards. Some of these new standards may require additional costly treatment facilities.

