

Coachella Valley Salinity Fact Sheet

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and Desert Water Agency (DWA) are committed to providing high quality drinking water that meets stringent federal and state drinking water quality standards. CVWD and DWA test nearly 20,000 water samples annually to ensure drinking water standard compliance. Samples are analyzed for more than 100 regulated and unrelated substances with tests performed by highly trained employees in state-certified laboratories. Below is more information about total dissolved solids (TDS), which is among the substances found naturally in Coachella Valley's groundwater supply.

- In the Coachella Valley, high quality drinking water comes primarily from an underground aquifer which is rich with naturally occurring salt and minerals at safe levels.
- Total dissolved solids (TDS) is the technical measurement of salinity in water.
- Natural salinity levels in local groundwater vary greatly due to geological features that include earthquake faults and ancient lake deposits.
- Natural salinity in local groundwater ranges from 130 to more than 2,000 parts per million (ppm); imported water from the Colorado River Aqueduct has a salinity of 550 to 750 ppm. One part per million is equivalent to one drop of water in a 10-gallon bucket.
- Drinking water is more heavily regulated than any other food or drink, yet neither the federal nor California regulatory agencies have determined that health standards are needed for salinity.
- California water agencies are required to meet consumer acceptance standards for salinity based on aesthetics like taste. A salinity level up to 1,000 ppm in drinking water is considered acceptable.
- Treating Colorado River water to remove salt before replenishment would be an unnecessary expense, resulting in customer water bills increasing as much as \$450 annually.
- The Colorado River Salinity Control Act already provides a cost-effective watershed approach to control salinity and protect the beneficial use of Colorado River water for groundwater replenishment.

Salinity of Colorado River water

- More than 33 million people rely on Colorado River water for drinking water. It is filtered before delivery, but that process does not require treatment to reduce salinity levels.
- Colorado River water meets all drinking water standards once unwanted microbial constituents are removed during treatment or by natural filtration through the sand and gravel aquifer.
- Natural filtration is more environmentally friendly and cost effective than artificial treatment processes.
- When Colorado River water blends with Coachella Valley groundwater, the result is water low in naturally occurring arsenic and chromium and an acceptable salinity level.
- All water supplies contain some level of dissolved minerals that occur naturally and include sodium, calcium, magnesium, potassium, bicarbonate, sulfate, chloride, nitrate, and fluoride.
- Few domestic water supplies are more extensively monitored than Colorado River water which has no detectable pesticides and contains lower nitrate levels than that found in groundwater supplying Coachella Valley residences and businesses.

