

Reader's Guide to the Consumer Confidence Report



The following questions and answers are provided to help Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD or District) customers understand and interpret the District's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). You can find additional water quality information on the District's website at sswd.org, or by calling (916) 972-7171.

1. What is the purpose of the Consumer Confidence Report?

Every year public water agencies such as SSWD are required by law to provide water quality information to their customers. The CCR is prepared in accordance with state and federal regulations. It includes information about the major sources of SSWD's drinking water supplies, what constituents are in those supplies, and how those constituents may affect public health. It also indicates how the District's water supplies compare with state and federal safe drinking water standards. Federal and state law dictates the content of the CCR.

2. Consumer Confidence Report or Annual Water Quality Report?

In the past, the CCR was referred to as the Annual Water Quality Report (AWQR). To be in line with State and Federal nomenclature for the document, SSWD now refers to the AWQR as the CCR.

3. What is the Cost to Produce the CCR?

In 2013, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the State agency that regulates drinking water utilities, the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW), expanded their interpretation of the Safe Drinking Water Act to allow for electronic CCR delivery. Since that time, SSWD has been using electronic delivery (via the District's website) as the primary method of distributing the CCR to customers. In accordance with regulatory requirements concerning electronic distribution, the District also invested a significant amount of resources each of the past four years reaching out to all customers and informing them about the availability of printed copies.

Electronic CCR delivery resulted in a reduction of paper consumption and printing costs; however, the District found that it required significantly more staff time responding to individual requests than it did directly mailing copies to customers. Because the District sent Business Reply Mail printed copy request forms to customers, total postage costs also increased. In consideration of the preceding, direct mail (via the USPS) is being used as the primary method of distributing the 2016 CCR to customers. An electronic version of the CCR will still be available on the District's website (www.sswd.org/2016ccr).

SSWD remains committed to the judicious use of rate-payer resources. To that end, staff will continue to review processes and look for ways to control costs while maintaining a high level of customer service.



4. What are the major sources of water delivered by SSWD?

The water customers receive comes from several different sources. SSWD has over 80 groundwater wells that are used to provide water in either the North Service Area (NSA) or South Service Area (SSA). When available, surface water purchased from the Placer County Water Agency (and treated by the San Juan Water District) is used to supplement the District's NSA water supply. Also, when available, treated surface water purchased from the City of Sacramento is used to supplement the District's SSA supply.

5. What kinds of constituents are found in drinking water?

To ensure tap water is safe to drink, the USEPA and the DDW have established regulatory standards that limit the amount of certain constituents in drinking water provided by public water systems.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some constituents, many of which are naturally occurring. Constituents such as microscopic organisms (bacteria, algae and viruses), and certain minerals can enter water as it travels over land surfaces or through the ground. The presence of these constituents does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

Per the latest CCR, SSWD's water continues to meet state and federal drinking water standards.

6. How do constituents get into the water supply?

Some constituents are natural and enter the water supply from the environment. Others come from cities, farms and certain industrial land uses and processes, including dry cleaning and rocket fuel manufacturing. Some constituents are by-products of the water disinfection process.

For each constituent detected in SSWD's supplies, the CCR indicates the possible sources of that constituent. Examples include erosion of natural mineral deposits, contact with naturally-occurring organic materials such as leaves, waste discharges from municipal and industrial sites, leaching from fertilizer use or septic tanks and runoff from livestock feedlots.

7. How are constituents measured and reported in the CCR?

Constituents are measured and reported in extremely small quantities such as parts per million, parts per billion and in some cases, parts per trillion. The "units" column of the CCR tables identifies the unit of measurement for each individual constituent detected. All analyses are performed by state-certified laboratories that meet minimum reporting requirements for each constituent analyzed. If these measurements are difficult to imagine, think about these comparisons:

Parts per million:

1 drop in 14 gallons¹

1 second in 12 days

1 inch in 16 miles

1 cent in \$10,000

Parts per billion:

1 drop in 14,000 gallons

1 second in 32 years

1 inch in 16,000 miles

1 cent in \$10 million

Parts per trillion:

10 drops in enough water to fill the Rose Bowl

1 second in 32,000 years

1 inch in 16 million miles

1 cent in \$10 billion

¹ A large bathtub holds about 42 gallons. An average swimming pool holds about 14,000 gallons.

8. What are the maximum levels allowed for constituents in drinking water?

The maximum contaminant level (MCL) listed for each constituent is the USEPA's and/or DDW's maximum permissible level of that constituent in drinking water. The health effects of a constituent are the primary factors considered by USEPA and DDW when establishing an MCL; however, analytical and treatment technologies as well as economic factors are also considered. The column next to the MCL in the report reflects DDW's Public Health Goal (PHG) or USEPA's Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) for each constituent. A PHG or MCLG is not a regulatory limit but rather an estimate of the level at which a constituent poses no known or expected health risk if consumed daily over a lifetime. In many cases, it may not be possible to remove or reduce a constituent to the level represented by the PHG or MCLG because the technology may not yet exist or may be so costly it would make tap water unaffordable.

9. What do "Primary Drinking Water Constituents," "Secondary Drinking Water Constituents" and "Unregulated Drinking Water Constituents" mean?

Constituents listed in the "primary" section are believed to pose a risk to public health if detected at levels greater than the MCL. Constituents listed in the "secondary" group can affect the appearance, taste and/or smell of water without affecting the safety of the water (unless they also have a primary standard). In other words, primary constituents are thought to have health-related impacts when present above their respective MCLs, while secondary constituents have aesthetic impacts when present above their respective MCLs. Constituents listed as "unregulated" are occasionally monitored to help state and federal agencies determine where certain constituents occur and whether they should be regulated. Unregulated constituents have no established standards.

10. Why does the current report have last year's date?

State and federal regulations require the CCR to be received by customers by July 1 of each year. Therefore, a complete year of sampling is only available for the previous year. The current report reflects the most recent water quality data available from the previous year and years prior.

11. Some sample dates listed in the report are older than others. Why isn't all the data current?

DDW allows water systems such as SSWD to monitor some constituents less than once per year because the concentrations of these constituents do not change frequently. The data, though still representative, may be more than a year old.

12. What does SSWD do to ensure the safety of the drinking water it provides?

Providing customers with high-quality, reliable water is SSWD's top priority. The District conducts regular water quality testing of its water supplies, both directly at the source and in the distribution system. SSWD's water is tested thousands of times each year to ensure quality.

The District tests and maintains 82 groundwater production wells and approximately 700 miles of water mains. SSWD serves over 174,000 people in a 36-square-mile area with more than 46,500 service connections.



13. Am I receiving groundwater or surface water?

When available, some parts of the District's service area may change from groundwater to surface water on relatively short notice in response to notifications from San Juan Water District or the City of Sacramento, both of which provide surface water to SSWD. Customers should assume that the constituents identified in the report may be present within the listed ranges at any given time.

14. Is it possible to get specific data for water that enters my home?

Customers can contact **Doug Cater**, Superintendent of Production, at 916.679.2884 or via email at dcater@sswd.org for details or more information.

Customers are encouraged to visit SSWD's web site at sswd.org to view the current and previous versions of the CCR.

Glossary of Terms – Constituents

Coliform and Total Coliform Bacteria: Microscopic organisms in water that are used as indicators of possible contamination.

Hardness: Hardness in water is caused by dissolved mineral compounds. It is expressed in parts per million (ppm) of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃). Water softening systems often express hardness as grains per gallon (grains/gal).

DBPs: DBPs or disinfection by-products, include trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs). THMs and HAAs are by-products of chlorine disinfection. They are formed when chlorine reacts with certain naturally-occurring organic substances in water.

Turbidity: Turbidity in water is caused by suspended matter such as clay, silt, finely divided inorganic and organic matter, and biological material.



SSWD Administrative Office

3701 Marconi Avenue, Suite 100 ♦ Sacramento, CA 95821-5346 ♦ Phone: 916.972.7171 ♦ Fax: 916.972.7639
Business Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ♦ sswd.org