

Keeping Your Water Clean and Safe

The mission of the Indian Wells Valley Water District is to deliver clean, safe, good tasting and affordable water to our customers. That is why, as required by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS), District crews conduct a regular regimen of literally almost one thousand water samplings each year to determine the presence, if any, of a number of possible biological contaminants.

The District employs state certified laboratories to routinely test for substances in five distinct categories:

- ❖ Microbial (viruses and bacteria)
- ❖ Inorganic (salts and metals, for example)
- ❖ Pesticides and herbicides
- ❖ Organic chemicals (some by-products of industrial processes and oil production)
- ❖ Radioactive (sometimes naturally occurring, sometimes a result of gas production, mining and other, similar activities)

California requirements regarding the frequency of sampling for particular contaminants vary widely because the concentration of some has been proved to change infrequently, while the levels of others can and do vary.

Each regulated contaminant has an “Action Level” along with two other benchmarks: a Maximum Contaminate Level (MCL) and a Public Health Goal. All have been determined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through extensive research and are designed to provide adequate safety margins regarding possible risks to human health. When any contaminant is measured at or above its MCL, the CDHS is notified immediately and District personnel take steps to handle the situation, using guidelines developed by both the CDHS and the EPA.

The District also samples for substances that are not yet regulated and for which an MCL has not yet been set. Take boron, as an example. While significant levels of boron have been detected in several IWVWD wells, this element has not been assigned an MCL. Therefore, we are adhering to all currently mandated requirements for boron.

The IWVWD feels it is prudent to maintain a practice of periodic sampling over and above that mandated by the state. We do this because we know that proactive testing can assist us in detecting and treating contamination problems long before they require more expensive and time consuming efforts to rectify.

Every year in late June, the Water District mails a Water Quality Report to all our customers. This document summarizes our most recent sampling results in comparison to potable water standards. This publication also contains other useful and important information regarding drinking water and public health.

Over the 30 plus square miles within its jurisdiction, the District controls and maintains over two hundred miles of underground pipeline, 11 wells, 11 storage tanks and other types of infrastructure. As our water system has expanded to keep abreast of increasing Valley population, the possible opportunities for contamination have also increased. And, as our operation has grown, so have our staffing needs with regard to both numbers and training.

For example, our in-house water testing laboratory was recently observed by personnel from Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. After reviewing and evaluating our equipment and procedures, our visitors determined that it would be beneficial to investigate implementing a similar facility of their own.

The IWWWD is in the business of providing you, our valued customers, with clean, high quality, affordable water. That is our bottom line. To that end, we will continue to safeguard your most precious resource with every tool and method available.