



**City of Phoenix**  
WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
Quality Reliability Value

# Phoenix Water Quality

June 2015

**Background: About 98% of Phoenix's water supply is surface water; primarily snow melt that travels down the Salt, Verde and Colorado Rivers, then to canals that lead to Phoenix's water treatment plants. Very little well water is utilized. Detailed information about the quality of Phoenix's tap water is available online at: <https://www.phoenix.gov/waterservicesite/documents/wsdprimarywqr.pdf>.**

## **1. Is Phoenix's tap water safe?**

Phoenix water meets or surpasses all federal and state requirements for health and safety. More than five million tests and measurements are performed each year at the water treatment plants and throughout the distribution systems. Phoenix's state of the art equipment and laboratories are used to test for more than 100 substances. Be assured that if water quality is ever an issue in Phoenix, customers will be notified.

## **2. What does Phoenix use to disinfect the water that reaches my tap?**

Phoenix's entire water supply is safely disinfected with chlorine before being delivered to consumers. Chlorine disinfection is one of the most widely used methods to safeguard drinking water. Federal law requires a minimum chlorine disinfectant level of 0.2 parts per million in the water leaving a water treatment plant and a maximum chlorine level of 4.0 parts per million in the distribution system. Phoenix adds about one part per million to ensure our water's safety throughout the distribution system. We also incorporate some of the most advanced water treatment processes available to ensure your water is safe to drink.

## **3. Who makes sure Phoenix water meets standards?**

Tap water is one of the most heavily regulated industries in the nation. Phoenix treats its drinking water to levels better than federal and state standards with regulatory oversight by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. From time to time various groups develop desired standards for drinking water that differ from those established by the EPA. While these theoretical standards may start with good intentions, comparing Phoenix's test results which are in full compliance with EPA standards, to artificial standards, can create confusing, incomplete, and many times extremely misleading information that is unfair to our customers and the city. Be assured that Phoenix complies with current EPA requirements, works with water associations to remain up to date on water quality standards and is committed to protecting public health and safety.

## **4. Does the taste, odor and hardness in Phoenix's water affect its safety?**

No. These are harmless, aesthetic aspects that some consumers may notice. Taste, odor and hardness are not regulated under drinking water and health standards. Taste or odor variations are often seasonal (stronger near the fall of the year) due to increased algae in the canals that

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transport surface water to Phoenix's treatment plants.

The algae are removed during the treatment process, although the scent may remain. The chlorine used in our treatment process and maintained throughout the distribution system to disinfect your water also can affect the taste and odor. The presence of minerals, such as calcium and magnesium, which originate from the soils our source water contacts as it travels to Phoenix's water treatment plants, contribute to hardness.

Phoenix understands that perceptions vary regarding taste and odor. The city continues to enhance the aesthetics of our tap water, even though the quality is extremely high, by using carbon during treatment (much like that in a refrigerator filter), highly advanced water monitoring and sampling techniques and blending of Central Arizona Project and Salt River Project (SRP) water. SRP also brushes its canals to help diminish taste and odor causing algae. It is important to note that private plumbing lines in your home or business and the use of filtration systems may affect these aesthetics significantly. Proper maintenance of them is crucial, not only for aesthetics, but for your health. To help with taste and odor, allow water to sit for a few minutes or add lemon or lime. For more information on taste, odor and hardness, please refer to Tap Water Taste, Odor & Harness link at <https://www.phoenix.gov/waterservices/FAQs>

### **5. Should I drink Phoenix's water if I have an immune system disorder?**

Although the city treats our water to meet or surpass all drinking water standards, some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as those undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, those with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA and Centers for Disease Control guidelines about appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

### **6. Do I need to use water filters at home?**

Since Phoenix water meets or surpasses standards, water filters are typically not necessary unless advised by your physician or desired as a personal choice. If you choose to use filters on your tap, refrigerator, etc., be sure to change filters according to manufacturer's instructions. More information about home treatment systems is available from the Arizona Water Quality Association. They can be reached at [azwqa.org](http://azwqa.org) or at 480-947-9850.

### **7. Where can I get more information about water?**

Detailed information about the quality of Phoenix's water is available online at [phoenix.gov/water](http://phoenix.gov/water) and <https://www.phoenix.gov/waterservices/waterquality/water-quality-reports>, where you'll find a copy of our annual Water Quality Report. You also may call the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline for information about the Safe Drinking Water Act or EPA's other drinking water programs at 800-426-4791.

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Websites that provide information about drinking water include:

American Water Works Association: [awwa.org](http://awwa.org)

Arizona Department of Health Services: [azdhs.gov](http://azdhs.gov)

Maricopa County Environmental Services Department: [maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://maricopa.gov/envsvc)

U.S. EPA – <http://water.epa.gov/drink/index.cfm>

Centers for Disease Control – [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality – [azdeq.gov](http://azdeq.gov)

Tap Into Quality – [tapintoquality.com](http://tapintoquality.com)

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