

Thirsty for Water Info?

Look What's Going On in April

Click on tucsonaz.gov/water/events or call (520) 791-4331 to find the latest information about water and sustainability. Coming soon:

- March 30- National Mayor's Challenge for
- April 30 Water Conservation - Take the Pledge
- April 1-30 Water Awareness Month, a resource day
- April 13-15 SAHBA Spring Home & Patio Show (more info below)
- April 21 Tucson Earth Day Festival and Parade, Reid Park



Check Out Our Booth at the Home & Patio Show

Visit the Tucson Water booth at the 2012 Spring Home & Patio Show presented by the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA), Friday-Sunday, April 13-15 at the Tucson Convention Center, 260 S. Church Ave. The Tucson Water booth will have rebate information and efficiency tips plus giveaways.

Go to sahbahomeshow.com or call (520) 795-3025 for show hours, exhibitor list, free parking maps, discounts and more.

For more information, materials in accessible formats, foreign language interpreters, and/or materials in a language other than English, please contact Tucson Water at (520) 791-4331 or (520) 791-2639 for TDD.



Your Water CONNECTION

The Link Between Customer Feedback and Water Quality

Tucson Water provides safe and high quality water to its customers. Our water complies with all federal, state and regional standards and adheres to the legally-enforceable requirements for 'primary drinking water' standards.

Tucson Water uses customer feedback to better understand perceptions about tap water taste, odor and appearance or 'secondary drinking water' standards. Although there are no legally-enforceable guidelines for secondary characteristics, our employees listen, investigate and provide information to customers about these issues. We understand how personal preferences about water taste, odor and appearance can affect perceptions about

Water Reliability Program



quality. At a recent focus group,

I had an opportunity to listen to customers candidly share their perspectives on the utility's water quality, value, and operations. Whether through a focus group, a call, an email, survey or public meeting, keeping Tucson Water informed about your concerns helps to shape future projects, fees and rates, outreach materials, conservation programs, long-range planning, and much more.

In this issue of *Your Water Connection*, you'll read about Tucson Water's Customer Support Unit, a team dedicated to responding to customers' inquiries about water quality and water pressure.

— Sandy Elder, INTERIM DIRECTOR, TUCSON WATER



PIMA COUNTY

*Away For an Extended Period?***How to Reduce Your Sewer Bill**

Did you know that if you will be away for more than 30 days you can ask for a reduction in your sewer bill? Many of our customers who are winter visitors or travel extensively are eligible to receive a reduction in their sewer bills.

Other customers who find they have to be hospitalized or spend several weeks or months in a rehabilitation facility are also eligible for a reduction.

Whatever the reason for being away from home for an extended period, the first step to receiving a “vacant rate” is to contact our Customer Service Division by calling (520) 740-6609 or completing an online form at www.dot.pima.gov/wwm/apps/sewerbillingsuspension/.

It's best to contact Customer Service as soon as you know you will be gone for an extended period.

The “vacant rate” will begin on the date you notify us you will be gone, even if it is after you've left the home for treatment or vacation. We can begin the rate on the date you designate in advance, as long as you tell us before you leave your home for medical care or to travel.

Staff will work with you to set up a “return date” if you are uncertain when you will return to your home. The return date can be shortened or extended as needed.

Once a “vacant rate” has been established for you, you will pay just a monthly administrative fee, currently \$11.14.

CITY OF TUCSON

You Can Help Clean Up Tucson

It seems that we are hearing more and more about how our community needs to be cleaned up. Our streets, sidewalks and medians are littered with trash. Plastic bags, aluminum cans, bottles, cigarette butts and paper are all part of the problem. One thing we all can do to help clean up our streets is to bag and tie trash before we put it out for collection. Loose trash can get blown away as it is being dropped into collection vehicles or can get knocked over before it is collected.

It is important to bag and tie your trash for these reasons:



- Control windblown litter. Windblown litter causes accidents, gets caught in our washes and vegetation, doesn't degrade and is expensive to clean up.
- Eliminate odors and flies. Garbage from our homes, particularly food waste, diapers, and paper products should be bagged to control odors which attract flies and other pests.

If you don't want to purchase trash bags, reuse your plastic bags from the grocery store. These can contribute to the litter problem, but if they are reused to bag trash and other waste, they will not blow away. If you have a shared alley container, your neighbors will appreciate your efforts, and if you have curbside trash service, bagging and tying your trash will keep your container clean.

Your utilities services statement includes fees for your water, wastewater, and environmental services.

The Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) – For more information about the regional wastewater system, call (520) 740-6500 or visit pima.gov/wwm.

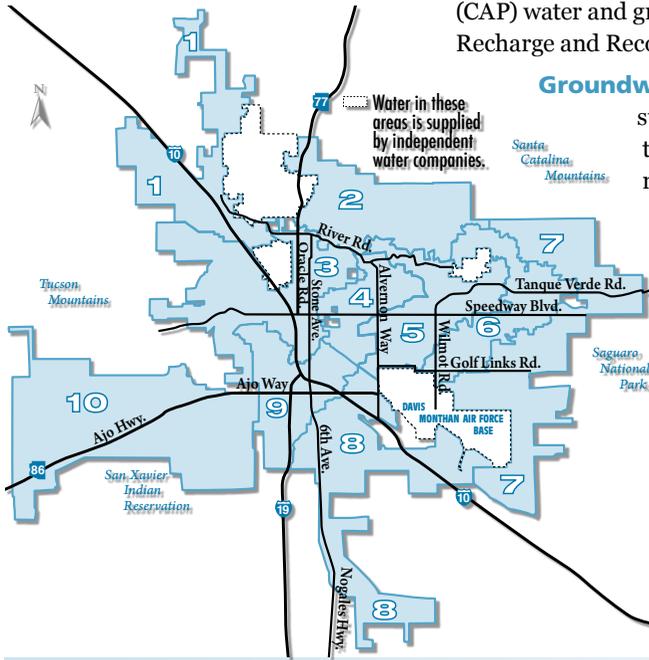
Environmental Services (ES) – Learn about how ES is protecting our groundwater and the environment at tucsonaz.gov/esd and (520) 791-3171.

Water quality report

January 2012



More than 20,000 individual water quality tests are performed annually on the drinking water derived from two sources: 1) groundwater and 2) the blend of recharged Central Arizona Project (CAP) water and groundwater from the Clearwater Recharge and Recovery Facility (CRRF).



Groundwater Source Report – Less than 50% of our total water supply comes from pumping native groundwater wells in the Tucson metropolitan area. These test results reflect the main distribution system, divided into 10 zones:

test results

*mg/L means milligrams per liter
1 mg/L = 1 teaspoon in 1,302 gallons.

Zones	Sodium (mg/L*) 76 SP	Mineral Content (mg/L*) 246 SP	Hardness (mg/L*) 76 SP	pH Level (S.U.) 246 SP	Temperature (deg°F) 246 SP
1	56	471	208	7.9	6
2	63	480	228	8.1	
3	63	482	241	8.0	
4	54	400	186	8.0	
5	59	421	207	8.0	
6	63	476	218	8.1	
7	57	442	209	8.1	
8	57	481	221	8.0	
9	56	431	190	8.0	
10	45	304	91	8.0	
Avg	59	445	208	8.0	

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has primary standards for levels of coliform bacteria and the disinfectant chlorine.

coliform

EPA standards for positive samples

Positive results
246 samples



chlorine

EPA Standard
Max. 4.0 mg/L

Actual Average
246 samples 0.9 mg/L

Tucson Water target average
0.8 to 1.2 mg/L

Clearwater Report – More than 50% of our total water supply is a blend of recharged CAP water and native groundwater from the CRRF. Using this recovered blended water means that we reduce groundwater pumping.

Sodium	66 mg/L	(Jan. 13, 2012)
Mineral Content	501.4 mg/L	(Jan. 10 – Feb. 10, 2012 avg.)
Hardness	229 mg/L	(Jan. 13, 2012)
pH	7.83 S.U.	(Jan. 10 – Feb. 10, 2012 avg.)
Coliform Bacteria	Negative	(Jan. 26, 2012)
Chlorine Level	1.06 mg/L	(Jan. 10 – Feb. 10, 2012 avg.)
Temperature	76.1°F	(Jan. 10 – Feb. 10, 2012 avg.)

To obtain water quality information, go to tucsonaz.gov/water and click on the Water Quality Tab for maps, FAQs, definitions, reports, online monitoring station results, and more. Or call (520) 791-4331 to schedule speakers, ask for an Annual Water Quality Report, or to request brochures.

Phone or Fieldwork

Customer Support Unit Resolves Issues

Does a glass of tap water look milky and clears up? Does it smell or taste different? Is water pressure fluctuating?

Tucson Water's Customer Support Unit has the answers to customer inquiries about their water quality and water pressure. According to the Unit Manager Melodee Loyer, this high-performing team of three:

- Responds to calls and emails
- Helps to identify if the source of the problem is on the customer side of the meter or in the main water distribution system
- Often diagnoses issues with customer plumbing over the phone
- Conducts field investigations to correct problems in the main water distribution system
- Participates in water quality research projects
- Follows up with customers



*The Customer Support Unit (l to r):
Jalal Mahmoudi, Lisa Grijalva, Manager
Melodee Loyer, Ambrosio Saavedra.*

“The Customer Support

Unit determines what is causing issues experienced by customers and helps to resolve them. Our goal is to ensure that Tucson Water delivers water that is the highest quality and safe,” said Loyer, a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) and Tucson Water employee of six and a half years.

According to Loyer, the Customer Support Unit team diagnoses 80 to 85% of calls while on the phone, with a high percentage of problems coming from the customer side of the water meter: water softeners in need of maintenance, water heaters with accumulated mineral deposits, and clogged faucet aerators are common issues. The Unit also has two field representatives who investigate and resolve issues such as changing water pressure or sediment in the water. Only about 4% of phone calls are related to the main water distribution system.

Loyer, who also manages reclaimed water operations and provides engineering support for the Water Quality and Operations Department, sees a challenge in being responsive to customers with a small team of three. “One person answers the Customer Support Unit phone at (520) 791-5945 while two others are out in the field. Should a customer have to leave a voice mail, we’ll return the call promptly. As always, emergency calls for main breaks or no water should be directed to dispatch

24/7 at (520) 791-4133.”

For pressure or water quality issues, contact the Customer Support Unit at (520)791-5945 or email TW_web1@tucsonaz.gov. Go to the Tucson Water website and click on the Publications tab to read brochures: *Hard Facts about Hard Water*, *Navigating the Waters: Your Guide to Home Treatment Systems*, and more.

Focus on Hard Water

The Customer Support Unit receives a lot of calls related to hard water. Hard water is water with a high dissolved mineral content of calcium and magnesium. Our groundwater is naturally hard, with hardness levels varying by area. Increasing hardness levels come primarily from mixing our community's hard groundwater with Central Arizona Project (CAP) water. As the percentage of CAP water increases, the hardness levels will increase. Hard water is safe to drink but changing hardness levels can generate customer inquiries. Loyer cites some of the common inquiries about hard water:

Q: How do I find out my area's hardness level to properly set my water softener?

A. Go online to tucsonaz.gov/water/neighborhood_wq and follow instructions to find out water hardness levels and other data by neighborhood. If you are unable to access the internet, call the Customer Support Unit at (520) 791-5945.

Q: How do I get rid of white calcium build-up on home appliances?

A. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on maintenance and stick to a regular maintenance schedule. For example, most water heater manufacturers recommend flushing the heater twice a year. Use cleaning products designed to minimize hard water build-up. Use white vinegar to clear deposits from coffee makers.

Q: My dishwasher isn't working well – dishes look spotty and streaky.

A. The new low-phosphate detergents combined with our hard water can cause dishwashers to work inefficiently. Use detergent or additives made to work well with hard water. Add a half cup of white vinegar to each load to help minimize mineral deposits on dishes. Make sure water heater temperature is not higher than 120-125 degrees.