



CITY OF ESCONDIDO

# WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Calendar Year **2023**

**Escondido's Drinking Water Meets or Exceeds All State  
and Federal Health Standards for Water Quality**

# What is this report about?

For 135 years, the Escondido Irrigation District, followed by the Escondido Mutual Water Company, and then the City of Escondido have proudly served the Hidden Valley, providing water for Escondido's agricultural, residential, and commercial needs.

The City of Escondido Utilities Department is pleased to present its annual Water Quality Report for calendar year 2023. The Water Division routinely monitors and tests our water supplies for the entire range of elements that have the potential to degrade your drinking water. As this report explains, Escondido meets or exceeds all State and Federal regulations for its water supplies, and provides its customers with drinking water of the highest quality.

This report shows the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, giving our customers a snapshot of the quality of water we provided last year. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to state standards.



## City of Escondido Leadership

### Escondido City Council

760-839-4638

**Dane White**, Mayor

**Christian Garcia**, Deputy Mayor (District 3)

**Consuelo Martinez**, Councilmember (District 1)

**Joe Garcia**, Councilmember (District 2)

**Michael Morasco**, Councilmember (District 4)

### Escondido City Manager's Office

760-839-4631

**Sean McGlynn**, City Manager

**Christopher W. McKinney**, Deputy City Manager

**Joanna Axelrod**, Deputy City Manager

### Utilities Administration

760-839-4662

201 N. Broadway

Escondido, CA 92025

Hours: Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Utilities Water Division

**Angela Morrow**, Interim Director of Utilities

**Reed Harlan**, Assistant Director of Utilities / Water

**Clay Clifford**, Water Treatment Plant Manager

**Federico Jimenez**, Water Distribution Manager

**Darren Southworth**, Canal Maintenance Manager

The Escondido City Council is the governing authority for the City's Water Division. Unless the City Council schedules otherwise or cancels a meeting, regular meetings are convened on the first four Wednesdays of every month at 5:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 N. Broadway. For your convenience, the meetings are also streamed live, and archived meetings are available for viewing online at:

[escondido.gov/776/City-Council](https://escondido.gov/776/City-Council)

## Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns regarding the water quality data presented in this report, please contact:

**Oyuna Jenkins**, Laboratory Manager:  
760-839-6290, ext. 7063

For questions regarding any other information contained in this report, please contact:

**Utilities Administration:**  
760-839-4662

Additional sources for drinking water and water quality information may be found at:

**San Diego Water Authority**  
858-522-6600  
[sdcwa.org](https://sdcwa.org)

**State Water Resources Control Board**  
Division of Drinking Water  
619-525-4159  
[waterboards.ca.gov](https://waterboards.ca.gov)

**Metropolitan Water District of Southern California**  
800-225-5693  
[mwdh2o.com](https://mwdh2o.com)

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
Safe Drinking Water Hotline  
800-426-4791  
[epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water](https://epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water)

# Where does my water come from?

The City's Water Division uses two sources for your drinking water.

The first source is local water, which originates from the watershed and well fields located near Lake Henshaw. Water from Lake Henshaw is transferred to Lake Wohlford via the San Luis Rey River, and a canal originally constructed during the period 1894 to 1895.

The second source is imported water that is purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA). This is "surface water" from the Colorado River Basin, and lakes and rivers in Northern California. The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) imports this water to Southern California from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. MWD stores water in reservoirs at Diamond Valley Lake (Hemet), Lake Mathews (southwest Riverside County), Lake Skinner (near Temecula), and at six smaller reservoirs located at the start of the Colorado River Aqueduct, in Los Angeles County, and in Orange County.

SDCWA purchases this imported water from MWD and distributes it to water agencies throughout San Diego County, including the City of Escondido. Escondido stores its imported water in Dixon Lake.

The raw water from these two sources is treated and disinfected at the Escondido-Vista Water Treatment Plant (WTP), jointly owned by the City of Escondido and the Vista Irrigation District. The WTP was constructed in 1976 and has capacity to produce 75 million gallons of potable (drinking) water per day. Water treatment at the plant includes mechanical and chemical removal of impurities, followed by inactivation of pathogens (e.g., viruses, bacteria, etc.) through disinfection. The result is clear and healthful water, meeting all state and federal requirements. Drinking water is then distributed to our customers through over 440 miles of water pipeline.



**1**  
**Bay Delta**  
Imported Water Source



**3**  
**Lake Henshaw**  
Local Water Source



**2**  
**Colorado River Aqueduct**  
Imported Water Source



**4**  
**City of Escondido Water System**  
Lake Wohlford, Dixon Lake, Water Distribution System, Escondido-Vista Water Treatment Plant

# Local and imported source water assessments

## Imported Water Sources

The City's Water Division purchases water from the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), who in turn purchases a majority of its water from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). Large water wholesalers such as MWD are required by the State Water Board to conduct an initial source water assessment, which is then updated every five years through a survey of source water quality called a watershed sanitary survey. Watershed sanitary survey updates examine possible sources of drinking water contamination, including stormwater runoff, recreational activities, wastewater discharges, wildlife, fires, and other watershed-related factors that could affect water quality. The surveys then recommend actions to better protect these source waters.

The most recent survey updates for Metropolitan's source waters are the:

- Colorado River Watershed Sanitary Survey - 2020 Update
- California State Water Project Watershed Sanitary Survey - 2021 Update

Treatment to remove specific contaminants can be more expensive than measures to protect water at the source, which is why Metropolitan and other water agencies invest resources to support improved watershed protection programs.

## Local Water Sources

In 2021, the City of Escondido and the Vista Irrigation District (VID) prepared an update to the sanitary survey of the

local watershed. This survey assesses activities within the watershed that have the potential to influence the quality of water flowing into Lake Henshaw, Dixon Lake, and Lake Wohlford. While the survey identifies a number of activities that could potentially affect water quality, including residential septic facilities, highway run-off, and agricultural and recreational activities, no significant amount of contaminants were detected in the local water supply in 2021.

This survey will be updated once again in 2026. A copy of the Watershed Sanitary Survey Update, which contains a Source Water Assessment Program, is available for review on the City's website via the following link:

[escondido.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4442/Watershed-Sanitary-Survey-Update-2021-PDF](https://escondido.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4442/Watershed-Sanitary-Survey-Update-2021-PDF)



# Why is there anything in my water?

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells.

As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, that can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural application and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Division of Drinking Water, prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations and California law also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that provide the same protection for public health.



Escondido-Vista Water Treatment Plant.

# How does Escondido collect and test its water?

At the Water Treatment Plant (WTP), the Plant Operations staff monitors various stages of the treatment process, and routinely collects water samples.

**T**esting is performed on alkalinity and turbidity in the raw water source; during the period that the water is being treated, monitoring takes place for coagulation, settling, and chlorine levels. Adjustments are made to the treatment process based upon the results from sampling and testing performed at the WTP.

Water is sampled from various points in the distribution system by both Water Distribution and Laboratory staff, and the samples are tested at the City's Water Quality Laboratory on a weekly basis. In 2023, over 4,280 water samples were collected from the distribution system, and 28,535 lab analyses were conducted for 214 separate water constituents.

The City's Water Quality Lab is staffed with chemists and laboratory technicians who are certified by the California Water Environment Association as Laboratory Analysts. These employees perform a variety of physical, chemical, and bacteriological tests on drinking water (as well as on wastewater, sludge, industrial wastewater, reclaimed water, and storm water), as necessary for process control and regulatory compliance. Laboratory staff analyzes data from collected samples, and they submit regulatory reports to the EPA, the SWRCB, and the California Department of Health.

Sampling and testing Escondido's source waters, from the time they arrive at the WTP to the time that drinking water is delivered to your home, is of the utmost importance to safeguard your water supply and to ensure that the water is of the highest quality.

## Should I take precautions?

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by visiting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) website at: [epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water)



Water Treatment Plant operator sampling.

# What do the terms in the following tables mean?



**Milligrams Per Liter: (mg/L)**  
Parts per million (ppm)  
One drop in a 10-gallon aquarium



**Micrograms Per Liter: ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ )**  
Parts per billion (ppb)  
One drop in a residential swimming pool

**Contaminant Candidate List (CCL):** The Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) is a list of contaminants that are currently not subject to any proposed or promulgated national primary drinking water regulations, but are known or anticipated to occur in public water systems. Contaminants listed on the CCL may require future regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

**Colony-Forming Units (CFU)**

**Detection Limit for Reporting (DLR):** A detected contaminant is any contaminant detected at or above its detection level for purposes of reporting.

**Disinfectants/Disinfection Byproducts Rule (D/DBPR)**

**Entry Point to Distribution (EPTD)**

**Locational Running Annual Average (LRAA):** The average of sample analytical results for samples taken at a particular monitoring location during the previous four calendar quarters.

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as is economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs are set to protect the odor, taste and appearance of drinking water.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs, set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), are not regulatory standards, not enforceable and are not required to be met by public water systems.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG):** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**Micromhos Per Centimeter ( $\mu\text{mho/cm}$ ):** A measure of a substance's ability to convey electricity.

**PicoCuries Per Liter (pCi/L):** A measure of radioactivity.

**Primary Drinking Water Standards (PDWS):** MCLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements.

**Public Health Goals (PHG):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs, set by the California Environmental Protection Agency, are not regulatory standards, not enforceable and are not required to be met by public water systems.

**Not Applicable (N/A)**

**Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU):** Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the water treatment process and distribution system.

**Regulatory Action Level (AL) / Notification Level (NL):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**Running Annual Average (RAA)**

**Treatment Technique (TT):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)**

# 2023 Water Quality Data Tables

The following tables list all of the regulated drinking water contaminants that were detected during the calendar year of this report. The presence of “contaminants” in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in these tables is from testing performed in the calendar year of the report.

The EPA and the State require that monitoring for certain contaminants be performed less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently.

PARAMETER (a)	Units	State MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Clarity (Turbidity) (b) (c)</b>								
Turbidity of Combined Filter Effluent in WTP (at 4 hour intervals)	NTU	TT = 1	N/A	0.02 - 0.09	0.05	-	No	Soil runoff.
	%	95%(<0.3)		Highest NTU = 0.09	%(<0.3NTU) = 100 %			
Turbidity in the Distribution System	NTU	5	N/A	0.05 - 0.40	0.07	-	No	Sediment in distribution system.
				Highest NTU = 0.40				
<b>Microbiological Contaminants (d) (e)</b>								
Total Coliform Bacteria (Monthly) in the Distribution System	%	5	(0)	0.00 - 1.80	0.30	-	No	Naturally present in the environment.
				Monthly Highest = 1.80 %				
E.coli (Monthly Positive Number) in the Distribution System	Count	0	(0)	0 - 0	0	-	No	Human and animal fecal waste.
				Total Positive Number = 0				
Heterotrophic Plate Count Bacteria in the Distribution System	CFU/mL	500	N/A	< 1 - 24	<1	-	No	Naturally present in the environment.
	%	95%(<500)		% (<500 CFU/ml) = 100 %				
Heterotrophic Plate Count Bacteria in EPTD	CFU/mL	TT = 500	N/A	< 1 - < 1	< 1	-	No	Naturally present in the environment.
PARAMETER	Units	State MCL [MRDL]	PHG (MCLG) [MRDLG]	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Disinfectants / Disinfection Byproducts in the Distribution System</b>								
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) Locational RAA (LRAA) Highest Locational RAA	µg/L	80	N/A	32 - 65	44	1	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination. Sampled quarterly in distribution system. (Stage 2 D/DBPR) (f)
				25 - 47	37			
				N/A	47			
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) Locational RAA (LRAA) Highest Locational RAA	µg/L	60	N/A	9 - 22	13	2	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination. Sampled quarterly in distribution system. (Stage 2 D/DBPR) (f)
				6 - 14	11			
				N/A	14			
Total Chlorine Residual (Cl <sub>2</sub> ) Running Annual Average(RAA) Highest Running Annual Ave.	mg/L	[4.0]	[4.0]	0.5 - 3.2	2.6	-	No	Addition of chlorine and ammonia as a combined disinfectant, chloramine. Calculated quarterly with monthly average values.
				2.63 - 2.71	2.67			
				N/A	2.71			
Chlorite (ClO <sub>2</sub> -) Monthly Average	mg/L	1	0.05	0.10 - 0.55	0.37	0.02	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination. Monitored during pre-chlorination with chlorine dioxide.
				0.11 - 0.52	0.37			
Chlorate (ClO <sub>3</sub> -) Monthly Average	µg/L	(NL=800)	N/A	190 - 600	350	20	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination. Monitored during pre-chlorination with chlorine dioxide.
				210 - 560	350			
PARAMETER	Units	State MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Inorganic Contaminants - Primary Standards (Finished Water)</b>								
Fluoride (F <sup>-</sup> )	mg/L	2	1	0.56 - 0.74	0.64	0.1	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Adding fluoride helps prevent dental caries in consumers. (Control Range: 0.6 - 1.2 ppm. Optimal Level: 0.7 ppm)
<b>Inorganic Contaminants - Secondary Standards (Finished Water)</b>								
Color	Units	15	N/A	1 - 2	2	-	No	Decaying vegetation or other naturally occurring organic materials.
Chloride (Cl <sup>-</sup> )	mg/L	500	N/A	76 - 100	90	-	No	Runoff / leaching from natural deposits. Seawater influence.
Corrosivity	SI	Non-corrosive	N/A	-0.16 - 0.50	0.17	-	No	Natural or industrial-influenced balance of hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen in the water. Affected by temperature and other factors.
Specific conductance	umho/cm	1600	N/A	673 - 1058	833	-	No	Substances that form ions when in water. Seawater influences.
Sulfate (SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sup>2-</sup>	mg/L	500	N/A	130 - 180	155	0.5	No	Runoff / leaching from natural deposits. Industrial wastes.
Total Dissolved Solids	mg/L	1000	N/A	397 - 659	512	-	No	Runoff / leaching from natural deposits. Industrial wastes.
Turbidity	NTU	5	N/A	0.05 - 0.10	0.06	-	No	Soil runoff.

PARAMETER	Units	State MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Inorganic Contaminants - Unregulated (Finished Water)</b>								
Boron	mg/L	(NL=1)	N/A	0.12 - 0.14	0.13	0.1	No	The State is considering setting concentration limits for Boron. State regulations now require monitoring though no limit is set.
Chlorate	µg/L	(NL=800)	N/A	180 - 560	340	20	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination. Monitored during pre-chlorination with chlorine dioxide.
Lithium	µg/L	N/A	N/A	15 - 30	23	9	No	Naturally occurring element, and numerous commercial uses including as a battery component. It is on the CCL5, and in UCMR5 monitoring requirement.
Manganese	µg/L	50	N/A	0.98 - 4.8	2.1	(0.4)	No	Leaching from natural deposits.(State DLR = 20 µg/L). Sampled in 2019. UCMR4 list 1 chemical contaminants (UCMR4 DLR = 0.4 µg/L).
PARAMETER	Units	State MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Radionuclides Contaminants (Finished Water); Sampled in 2021</b>								
Gross Alpha Particle Activity	pCi/L	15	(0)	ND - 3.25	ND	3	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Sampled in 2021.
Gross Beta Particle Activity	pCi/L	50	(0)	ND - 4.57	ND	4	No	Decay of natural and man-made deposits. Sampled in 2021.
Uranium	pCi/L	20	0.43	2.1 - 2.1	2.1	1	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Sampled in 2021.
PARAMETER	Units	State AL	PHG	90th Percentile of 57 Samples	# of Sites > AL	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Inorganic Contaminants - Copper / Lead in Residential Taps (g); Sampled in 2021</b>								
Copper (Cu)	mg/L	1.3	0.3	0.65	0	0.05	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Sampled in 2021.
Lead (Pb)	µg/L	15	0.2	< 5	0	5	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits. Sampled in 2021.
PARAMETER	Units	State MCL [MRDL]	PHG (MCLG) [MRDLG]	Range	Average	DLR	Violation	Typical Source/Comments
<b>Additional Analyzed (Finished Water)</b>								
Total Alkalinity as CaCO3	mg/L	N/A	N/A	110 - 150	130	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
Bicarbonate (HCO3)-	mg/L	N/A	N/A	122 - 183	156	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
pH	Units	N/A	N/A	7.78 - 8.15	8.00	-	No	
Hardness as CaCO3	mg/L	N/A	N/A	160 - 230	195	-	No	Leaching. Hardness is mostly due to the presence of magnesium and calcium, usually naturally occurring.
Calcium (Ca)	mg/L	N/A	N/A	40 - 56	47	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
Magnesium (Mg)	mg/L	N/A	N/A	16 - 21	19	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
Sodium (Na)	mg/L	N/A	N/A	80 - 100	88	-	No	Leaching. Sodium refers to the salt present in the water and is generally naturally occurring.
Potassium (K)	mg/L	N/A	N/A	3.9 - 5.0	4.5	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
Silica (SiO2)	mg/L	N/A	N/A	5.0 - 8.7	7.3	-	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching.
Total Chlorine Residual (Cl2)	mg/L	[4.0]	[4.0]	2.6 - 3.5	3.0	-	No	Addition of chlorine and ammonia as a combined disinfectant, chloramine.
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)	µg/L	80	N/A	33 - 55	42	1	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination.
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5)	µg/L	60	N/A	8 - 20	12	2	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination.
Chlorite (ClO2-)	mg/L	1	0.05	0.11 - 0.59	0.39	0.02	No	Byproducts of drinking water chlorination. Monitored during pre-chlorination with chlorine dioxide.
Total Organic Carbon(TOC)	mg/L	TT	N/A	2.0 - 3.5	2.6	0.3	No	TOC provides a medium for the formation of disinfectant by-products. These by-products include TTHMs and HAA5.

## Data Table Notes

- (a) Data shown are annual averages and ranges.
- (b) This table reflects the clarity or turbidity produced at the WTP and in the distribution system.
- (c) The turbidity level of the filtered water shall be less than or equal to 0.3 NTU in 95% of the measurements taken each month.
- (d) Total coliform MCLs: No more than 5% of the monthly samples may be total coliform positive.
- (e) The City of Escondido Water Distribution System consists of approximately 444 miles of pipelines. Tests are performed each week at various points along the system for compliance with bacteriological and physical parameters. Of concern to all customers is the bacteriological quality of the drinking water. The distribution system table indicates the number of positive samples found in the system.
- (f) Data are calculated from the average of quarterly samples.
- (g) The Federal and State standards for lead and copper are Action Levels. If the Action Levels are exceeded, treatment may be required. The data presented in the table is the 90th percentile contaminant level from all tests performed.

## Fluoride

California state law requires that water utilities serving more than 10,000 customers supplement naturally occurring fluoride to improve oral health. The levels of fluoride in Escondido's treated water are maintained within a range of 0.6 – 1.2 mg/L, with an optimum level of 0.7 mg/L as required by the California Department of Public Health. More information about fluoridation and oral health is available from the California Water Boards at:

[waterboards.ca.gov/drinking\\_water/certlic/drinkingwater/Fluoridation.html](https://waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/Fluoridation.html)

## Lead and Copper Rule

Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with individual customer's service lines and home plumbing. The City of Escondido is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. The Lead and Copper Rule requires the collection of special samples from designated residents every three years; these tests were last performed in June 2021. The data tables in this report show the levels of copper and lead found in the 57 homes of these selected customers, and are an indication of the degree of leaching within the customer-owned copper plumbing and brass faucets.

The next Lead and Copper Rule sampling will be performed on resident water systems in June 2024.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you do so, you may wish to collect the flushed water and reuse it for another beneficial purpose, such as watering plants. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at:

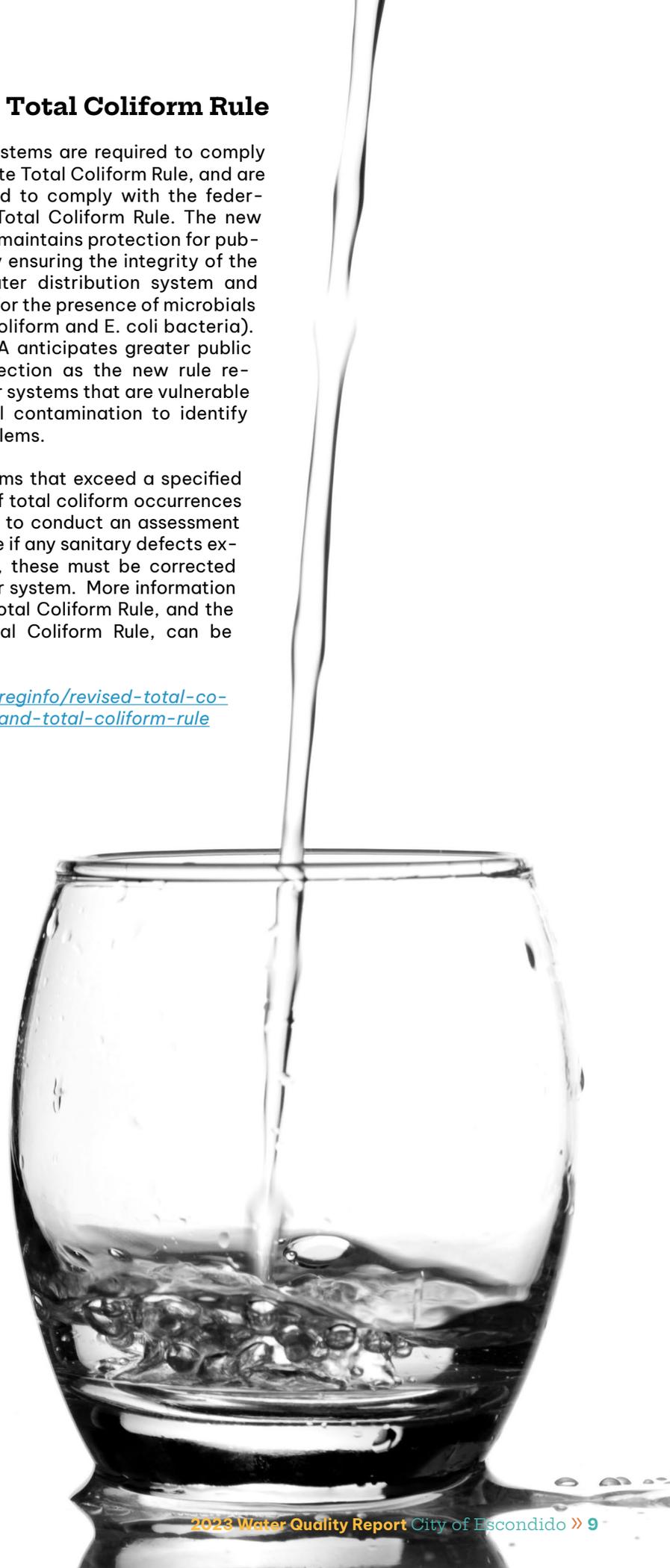
[epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule](https://epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule)

## Revised Total Coliform Rule

All water systems are required to comply with the state Total Coliform Rule, and are also required to comply with the federal Revised Total Coliform Rule. The new federal rule maintains protection for public health by ensuring the integrity of the drinking water distribution system and monitoring for the presence of microbials (i.e., total coliform and E. coli bacteria). The U.S. EPA anticipates greater public health protection as the new rule requires water systems that are vulnerable to microbial contamination to identify and fix problems.

Water systems that exceed a specified frequency of total coliform occurrences are required to conduct an assessment to determine if any sanitary defects exist. If found, these must be corrected by the water system. More information about the Total Coliform Rule, and the Revised Total Coliform Rule, can be found at:

[epa.gov/dwreginfo/revised-total-coliform-rule-and-total-coliform-rule](https://epa.gov/dwreginfo/revised-total-coliform-rule-and-total-coliform-rule)



# Water – A Precious Resource!

Be waterwise! Following Andrea’s advice in her 2023 Water Poster Contest winning entry to “Love Water, Save Water,” here are a few small steps that you can take to embrace water smart living:

- ◆ Repair irrigation leaks or breaks as soon as they’re discovered.
- ◆ Water plants, not the sidewalk or street!
- ◆ Turn off sprinklers before, during, and after rain.
- ◆ Wash only full loads of laundry or dishes.



## Kick Your Grass to the Curb!

Say goodbye to your thirsty turf grass and get inspired by Escondido residents that have replaced their lawns with lush and colorful California-friendly landscapes. Gardening with native and low water use plants can benefit the environment, and can provide savings on your water bill.



# Frequently Asked Questions from our Customers

## **Q Why does tap water sometimes taste or smell strange?**

When your water tastes or smells strange, the problem could be caused by many things. One of the greatest contributors to taste and odor problems, at least in our local water here in the City of Escondido, is high levels of Total Organic Carbons (TOC). When the level of TOC is elevated in the source water prior to treatment, it can have a negative impact on taste and odor levels in the water distribution system. Algae in locally-stored water can cause musty or fishy odors, especially during the hot summer months. Even after chlorine has been added to disinfect the water, these odors may persist.

Taste and odor, however, do not indicate a higher or lower degree of water quality. Sometimes plumbing can cause

a metallic flavor, especially if the water has been sitting in pipes for a long time. In addition, many people mistakenly confuse odors from their sink drain with the smell of their tap water. The odor may actually be coming from the drain, where bacteria grow on food, soap, hair, and other things that are trapped there. Gases in the drain that smell get stirred up when water goes down the pipe. Odor can also come from bacteria growing in water heaters - usually ones that have been turned off for a while or have the thermostat set too low.

For odor, consider these questions: Does it come from only one faucet? Does it go away after running the water for a few minutes? If the answer is yes to either question, the source of the odor is probably within your plumbing system. If no to both questions, please call Water Distribution staff at **760-839-4668**.

## **Q What is Geosmin?**

Geosmin is a non-harmful, naturally occurring compound produced by bacteria in soil and algae found in surface water. Geosmin is common throughout the United States; in southern California, it is most noticeable during warmer months and when the City of Escondido's water supply is sourced from open surface reservoirs. Geosmin typically produces an earthy or musty odor similar to the odor of damp soil and is detectable by many people at concentrations of 5 to 10 parts per trillion (that's five to ten drops in 16 Olympic size pools). Chilling water, adding ice cubes, a slice of lemon or cucumber, or a few drops of lemon juice will improve the taste and odor.



Escondido 2023 Landscape Contest Winner - "Before"



Escondido 2023 Landscape Contest Winner - "After"



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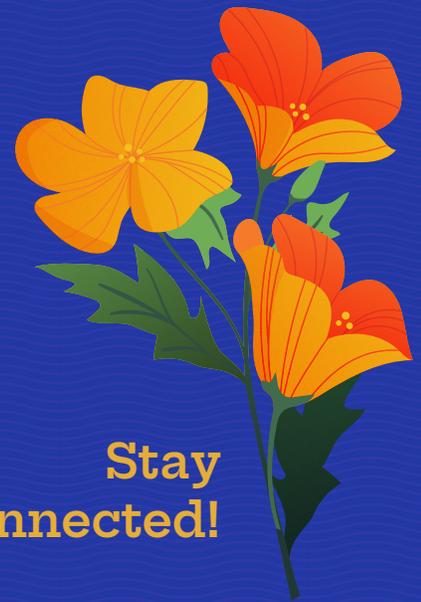
## **WaterSmart Resources**

Visit [watersmartsd.org/residential](https://watersmartsd.org/residential) for turf replacement and device rebate programs, classes, tips, and how-to videos to get started on transforming your yard. Free workshops led by landscape design professionals are offered both online and in-person, and guide you through the following topics:

- ◆ Landscape design and maintenance
- ◆ Soil identification and health
- ◆ Turf types and removal tips
- ◆ Plant selection
- ◆ Rainwater catchment
- ◆ Irrigation retrofits
- ◆ Project installation



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