


















Drinking Water Glossary

Safe, clean drinking water is a fundamental part of our everyday lives. This glossary breaks down common terms associated with drinking water so that you can feel confident drinking water straight from your tap.



 Action Level:	The concentration level of a contaminant that, if exceeded, requires water agencies to take corrective action (e.g. notifying the public, remediation, etc.).
 Compliance:	When all state and federal drinking water regulations and standards are met.
 Customer Confidence Reports:	Annual drinking water quality reports that water agencies are required to deliver to customers by July 1 each year, as mandated by the EPA.
 Contaminant:	Any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates some contaminants and sets monitoring requirements for Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), action levels, and treatment technologies.
 Distribution System:	A network of pipes that delivers water to customers.
 Division of Drinking Water:	The division of the State Water Resources Control Board responsible for regulating public drinking water systems in California.
 Drinking Water standards:	State and federal standards that regulate the safety of our drinking water.
 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):	The federal body responsible for regulating and protecting water quality in the United States.
 Maximum Contaminant Level:	The highest level of a contaminant allowed in a public water system, regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act.
 Potable Water:	Water that is safe for drinking.
 Public Water System (PWS):	A system of water distribution with 15 or more service connections or serves 25 or more people daily for at least 60 days out of the year.
 Regional Water Quality Control Boards:	The nine regional agencies responsible for water rules and regulations in California.
 Safe Drinking Water Act:	A law passed in 1974 that regulates drinking water to protect public health.
 Small Water System:	Water systems serving 10,000 or fewer customers.
 Source Water:	The body of water that provides water for beneficial use.
 State Water Resources Control Board:	The state body responsible for protecting water quality and ensuring proper water resource allocation in California.
 Water Quality:	The measure of how clean and safe water is for use by people, wildlife or the environment.