

# What's in your water?

The mineral content and hardness for each of Tucson Water's Water Quality Zones are published each month in *Your Water Connection*, the newsletter included in Tucson Water customers' water bills. You can also find up-to-date information on mineral content at Tucson Water's web site at [www.cityoftucson.org/water](http://www.cityoftucson.org/water).

To stay up-to-date on water quality issues and to learn more about your water, subscribe to the *EMPACT – Water Info Now* Newsletter. It's free! Get on the mailing list by calling 791-5080, Ext. 1372 or email [DQuinta1@ci.tucson.az.us](mailto:DQuinta1@ci.tucson.az.us).

## Minerals and Hardness

Ca  
Mg



# Minerals

## What is a primary drinking water standard?

A primary drinking water standard is the maximum level of a chemical or microbe legally allowed to be present in your drinking water. As part of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) sets primary standards for approximately 90 contaminants in drinking water. For each of these, USEPA sets a legal limit called a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water. Tucson Water must, by law, provide drinking water that meets the primary standards and is safe to drink.

## What is a secondary drinking water standard?

Secondary standards relate to the taste, odor, or appearance of drinking water. USEPA sets non-enforceable guidelines that address aesthetic characteristics and cosmetic effects. Public water utilities and states are not legally required to meet these secondary standards, but Tucson Water works to comply with them.

For more information about water standards visit the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov> or Tucson Water's website at <http://www.cityoftucson.org/water>.

## Mineral content

Mineral content is the measure of the amount of total dissolved solids or minerals in drinking water. The level of naturally-occurring dissolved minerals in Tucson's drinking water averages about 275 milligrams/liter (mg/L) but can range as high as 620 mg/L. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) secondary standard for total dissolved solids is 500 mg/L.

## Minerals and Hard Water and How They Affect Our Daily Lives

Hard water is naturally high in dissolved minerals like calcium and magnesium. Hard water is not a health risk, but it can be a nuisance because it can cause mineral buildup in evaporative coolers, fountains, hot water heaters and coffee makers.

You can measure the hardness of your water by seeing how easily soap lathers. It is easier to produce lather using soft water. Hard water requires more soap to clean effectively.

Hardness levels in Tucson's drinking water average about 120 mg/L. Water in this range is defined as moderately hard. The United States Environmental Protection Agency does not have a set standard for hardness.

# Hard Water

## Living with Hard Water

There are some things you can do to reduce the affects of hard water in your home. Using white vinegar on dishes and glassware will reduce the spotting caused by minerals. You should also follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to maintain your appliances and water-heating systems when using hard water. Following good housekeeping practices and using laundry products designed for use with hard water will minimize its effects.

*One milligram per liter is the same as one part per million. To give you an idea of how small an amount this is, it's the same as 1 teaspoon in 1,320 gallons.*

*One microgram per liter is the same as one part per billion, and is the equivalent of one teaspoon in 1.3 million gallons.*

What essential product that you rely on every day is tested for purity an average of every 60 seconds, 24 hours a day?  
**Your drinking water!**