Lead in drinking water

Vallecitos' water is safe from lead

Vallecitos Water District customers can be confident in the quality of their drinking water, which meets or exceeds all federal and state standards for safe drinking water. The most accurate source of water quality information is the annual Consumer Confidence Report (Water Quality Report). Customers who want a hard copy of the report may email or call the Public Information Department at (760) 744-0460.

Vallecitos tap water comes from:

1. The Olivenhain Municipal Water District's (OMWD) David C. McCollom Water Treatment Plant, in Escondido, California.
2. The City of Oceanside's Robert A. Weese Filtration Plant in Vista, California.
3. The San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) via either:
    1. The Twin Oaks Valley Water Treatment Plant near San Marcos, California.
    2. The Claude "Bud" Lewis Desalination Plant in Carlsbad, California.
    3. The Robert A. Skinner Filtration Plant at Lake Skinner, California.

Vallecitos is a member of the SDCWA and purchases most of its water supply from the SDCWA, which in turn purchases its water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). MWD is a wholesaler that provides water to more than 19 million people living in Southern California. MWD addresses questions about its own water quality here.

MWD imports its water from two sources: a 242-mile-long aqueduct which transports Colorado River water from Lake Havasu to Southern California and a 444-mile-long aqueduct that transports water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta in Northern California to Lake Skinner located in Riverside Country. Both of these sources are naturally low in corrosive qualities.

With the national media stories on corrosive water leading to lead in drinking water, the District has received questions about lead service lines and water quality in general, which are addressed here:

Does the federal government monitor water for lead? Yes. In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a regulation to control lead and copper in drinking water, known as the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). The EPA revised the regulation in 2000 and 2007. Congress has also set limits on the amount of lead that can be used in plumbing products. These requirements were first enacted in 1986 and then reduced to lower levels in 2011.

Is there lead in Vallecitos' water? No. The main risk of lead in drinking water comes from old service lines leading from the water provider's water main to the individual property. Vallecitos' water mains are predominantly cement pipe and ductile iron pipe with no lead pipe used in water mains. There are also very few properties within Vallecitos' service area that have lead used in the plumbing inside the property. Unfortunately, in the Northeast and Midwest there are untold numbers of lead service lines connecting older homes to water mains. If those pipes are exposed to corrosive water, or if water sits too long inside them, the lead could be released and may end up coming out of the tap. Such appears to be the case in Flint, Michigan.

Has Vallecitos ever had issues with lead in drinking water? No. Vallecitos has been monitoring the drinking water for lead since the EPA regulations went into effect in 1991. Specific homes within our service area are selected for testing every three years per EPA guidelines. Water samples are collected inside each selected

residence at the tap so that the customer's plumbing is tested along with the service line delivering water to the house. There are no lead service lines within Vallecitos' service area and Vallecitos has never had a sample with results exceeding the allowable level set by the EPA. Due to the diligence of Vallecitos' Water Operations team, Vallecitos has a consistent record of either meeting or exceeding all state and federal drinking water regulations, which further highlights our commitment to providing our customers with exceptional quality drinking water.

What are the new State of California testing requirements?
As a result of the issues in Flint, in 2017 the State of California's Division of Drinking Water amended drinking water permits to community water systems to include lead testing in schools that serve grades K – 12 on the Department of Education's (DOE) school directory. This amended permit requires Vallecitos to sample for lead at any qualified public or private school that requests sampling assistance, in writing, from the Vallecitos Water District. Vallecitos will provide sampling and lead analysis at no charge for schools located within our service area. Each DOE school (K-12) can request one lead sampling event by November 1, 2019. Letters should be mailed to:

Vallecitos Water District
Attn: Lead Testing for Schools
201 Vallecitos De Oro
San Marcos, CA 92069

For general information on the state's school lead testing requirements, please visit their website.

Where can I get more information? For more information on Vallecitos' water quality, click here. If you have more questions about drinking water in general, call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or go to their website. For information on drinking water in schools and childcare facilities, go to the EPA's website.