

Fact Sheet

Water Quality Lab

Water quality — the prime concern

As the primary wholesale water supplier in Santa Clara County, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is dedicated to assuring a reliable supply of healthy, clean drinking water.

In support of this mission, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is home to one of the most sophisticated labs dedicated to the safety of our tap water, source water and groundwater. In 2008, the water quality unit moved into a new, state-of-the-art lab building designed to house the specialized test equipment used to meet increased water-quality testing needs and respond to emerging contaminants and more stringent water quality standards.

A state-of-the-art lab

The water district is nationally recognized as a leader in water quality analysis and holds one of the highest levels of certification available from the California Department of Public Health. This state-of-the-art laboratory tests and quantifies the quality of Santa Clara County's drinking water.

The laboratory tests over 200,000 samples per-year for over 353 regulated and unregulated contaminants, including: inorganic, organic and microbiological contaminants. The lab is staffed by chemists, microbiologists and support personnel to handle and analyze water samples from throughout Santa Clara County.

Overseeing safe drinking water

To ensure safe drinking water, the water quality lab tests the imported source water and local reservoir water before it arrives at the district water treatment plants for purification. The water district upholds stringent testing standards to meet all state and federal regulations for drinking water safety. The water district is able to maintain high quality water deliveries to local water retailers by operating its own laboratory to enable technicians to quickly respond to changes in the raw source water.

The water district also has a program to supplement the regular testing recommended for all private well-owners.



Safe water in creeks and groundwater basins

The lab is also responsible for monitoring the water quality in our creeks, reservoirs and groundwater basins. Water quality tests for watershed tributaries and reservoirs include: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen levels, bacteria, ammonia levels, nitrate levels, phosphate levels, turbidity, and pesticides. The district laboratory also leads the effort to monitor other potential contaminants that could effect our treated water such as zebra mussels.

Regulatory

The district's water quality lab is accredited by the California Department of Public Health, Environmental Accreditation Lab Program and is audited every two years. Annual performance testing features a battery of blind samples that are analyzed for the identity and concentration of several hundred constituents in each study. The district lab passes these tests with impeccable accuracy.

The district laboratory also teams with other agencies to provide support through the California Mutual Aid Laboratory Network and also the Federal Water Lab Alliance. These agency alliances provide a network to respond to intentional or unintentional threats to our water supply.

A “purpose-built” building

The water district’s lab has been designed around state-of-the-art ventilation and isolation equipment. The \$17.5 million building is constructed as an “essential facility,” with an upgraded design standard similar to hospitals, police and fire stations. The building is constructed to withstand a major earthquake, ensuring uninterrupted water quality support during an emergency situation.

Water quality reports

The Santa Clara Valley Water District’s water quality laboratory is responsible for ensuring that the drinking water that the district provides is of the highest possible quality, meeting or exceeding all federal and state drinking water standards.

The laboratory accomplishes this by performing a range of analytic services on both untreated (source) and treated water, including organic, inorganic and microbiological analysis. The laboratory’s water quality professionals perform water quality compliance and operational control monitoring, using methodology approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and state-of-the-art instrumentation.

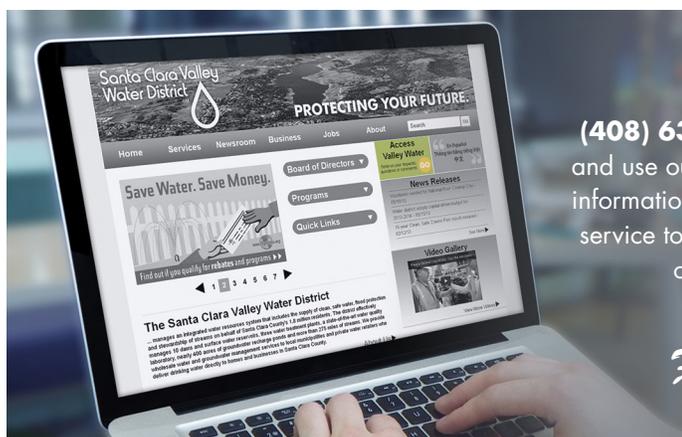
The monthly water quality report shows the quality of source (untreated) water at each of the district’s three water treatment plants, and the treated water which the district delivers to water retailers in Santa Clara Valley.

To take a look at the monthly report, go to:
<http://www.valleywater.org/services/WaterQualityReports.aspx>

Monitoring recycled water

The water district lab also helps to monitor the quality of recycled water in Santa Clara County. The increased use and new standards for maintaining the quality of recycled water have added to the work load at the district lab. The new Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center (a joint project with the city of San José) has been completed. A majority of its operational and compliance testing will be done here at the water quality lab.

The lab is staffed by chemists, microbiologists and support personnel to handle and analyze water samples from throughout Santa Clara County.



CONTACT US

For more information, contact **Jim Scott** at **(408) 630-3228**, or visit our website at valleywater.org and use our **Access Valley Water** customer request and information system. With three easy steps, you can use this service to find out the latest information on district projects or to submit questions, complaints or compliments directly to a district staff person.



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