

# 2018

## Water Quality Report

**BEAR GULCH DISTRICT**



Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable.  
Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

**Quality. Service. Value.®**

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# Welcome

Since 1936, California Water Service (Cal Water) has been committed to providing quality, service, and value to our customers. Our highest priority is to deliver a reliable supply of water that meets all federal and state water quality standards, any and every time you turn on the tap. This means you don't have to wonder whether your water is safe to use and drink; we're dedicated to making sure it is.

In 2018, we conducted 428,037 tests on 66,551 water samples for 318 constituents. **We are pleased to confirm that we met every primary and secondary state and federal water quality standard last year.**

Ensuring that high-quality water is always available to you means maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure needed to move water from the source to your tap, and having expert professionals to assist you with both routine service needs and after-hours emergencies. Although the costs to obtain, treat, test, store, and deliver safe water continue to increase across the country, we work hard to operate efficiently to keep your water affordable — less than a penny per gallon in almost all of our service areas.

This annual water quality report details any constituents detected in your water supply in 2018 and shows how your water compares to federal and state water quality standards. It also highlights other current water quality issues and steps we take to protect your health and safety.

If you have any questions, you can contact us by phone, online at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com), or in person at our local Customer Center. For important water service announcements, please visit our web site or watch for information in your monthly bill, and be sure your contact information is up to date by visiting [ccu.calwater.com](http://ccu.calwater.com).

Sincerely,

Dawn Smithson, District Manager, Bear Gulch District

[Bear Gulch District 3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas #A Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558 (650) 561-9709]



# Your Water System

Cal Water has provided high-quality water utility services in the communities of Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton, and portions of Menlo Park, Redwood City, and San Mateo County since 1936.

To meet our customers' needs, we use a combination of local surface water and surface water purchased from the City and County of San Francisco (SFPUC). The local surface water, about 11% of our total supply, comes from our 1,200-acre watershed in the Santa Cruz Mountains in Woodside; it is collected and treated at our reservoir and treatment plant in Atherton. The remaining 89% of our supply is purchased from the SFPUC.

Our company-wide water quality assurance program includes vigilant monitoring throughout our systems and testing at our state-of-the-art laboratory. Additionally, we proactively maintain and upgrade our facilities to ensure a reliable, high-quality supply.

**If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please contact our local Customer Center, either by phone at (650) 561-9709 or through the Contact Us link at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).**

## USING WATER WISELY

As we await more information on the long-term water-use regulations from the State of California, it's important that we make water-use efficiency a way of life. Using water wisely will ensure that we have enough water in dry years and for generations to come.

Cal Water has a robust water conservation program that includes rebates, kits, and other tools to help our customers save water.

Visit [www.calwater.com/conservation](http://www.calwater.com/conservation) for details.

## WATER QUALITY LABORATORY

Water professionals collect samples from throughout the water system for testing at our state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, which is certified through the stringent Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP). Scientists, chemists, and microbiologists test the water for 318 constituents with equipment so sensitive it can detect levels as low as one part per trillion. In order to maintain the ELAP certification, all of our scientists must pass blind-study proficiency tests each year for every water quality test performed. Water quality test results are entered into our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), a sophisticated software program that enables us to react quickly to changes in water quality and analyze water quality trends in order to plan effectively for future needs.

## CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL

To ensure that the high-quality water we deliver is not compromised in the distribution system, Cal Water has a robust cross-connection control program in place. Cross-connection control is critical to ensuring that activities on customers' properties do not affect the public water supply. Our cross-connection control specialists ensure that all of the existing backflow prevention assemblies are tested annually, assess all non-residential connections, and enforce and manage the installation of new commercial and residential assemblies. Last year, our specialists oversaw installation of 2,243 new assemblies and testing of 39,358 backflow prevention assemblies company-wide.

Our customers are our first line of defense in preventing water system contamination through backflow. A minor home improvement project can create a potentially hazardous situation, so careful adherence to plumbing codes and

standards will ensure the community's water supply remains safe. Please be sure to utilize the advice or services of a qualified plumbing professional.

Many water use activities involve substances that, if allowed to enter the distribution system, would be aesthetically displeasing or could present health concerns. Some of the most common cross-connections are:

- Garden hoses connected to a hose bib without a simple hose-type vacuum breaker (available at a home improvement store)
- Improperly installed toilet tank fill valves that do not have the required air gap between the valve or refill tube
- Landscape irrigation systems that do not have the proper backflow prevention assembly installed on the supply line



# Protecting Our Watersheds

## SFPUC WATERSHED SANITARY SURVEY

The SFPUC conducts watershed sanitary surveys for the Hetch Hetchy source annually and local water sources every five years. The last local sanitary survey was done in 2016. The SFPUC conducted a special watershed sanitary survey for the Upcountry Non-Hetch Hetchy Source (UNHHS) in 2015 as part of its drought response plan efforts. These surveys evaluated the sanitary condition, water quality, potential contamination sources, and results of watershed management activities, and were completed with support from partner agencies including the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service.

These surveys identified wildlife, stock, and human activities as potential contamination sources. You may contact the San Francisco District office of the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Division of Drinking Water (DDW) at (510) 620-3474 to review these activities.

We encourage customers to join us in our efforts to prevent water pollution and protect our most precious natural resource.

## BG WATERSHED SANITARY SURVEY

Cal Water's Bear Gulch District conducted a watershed sanitary survey in 2016 at both the entire company-owned watershed above the Lower Woodside diversion dam and the watershed land near the Lower Bear Gulch Creek diversion.

The survey utilized field data from foot and car surveys of portions of the watershed, as well as remotely gathered data such as water samples and topographic maps. It concluded that all regulated contaminants in the treated water are below threshold levels of concern for public health. This indicates that high-quality water is supplied to the treatment facility, and that water treatment procedures are sufficient to ensure that customers receive high-quality water.



# 2018 Results

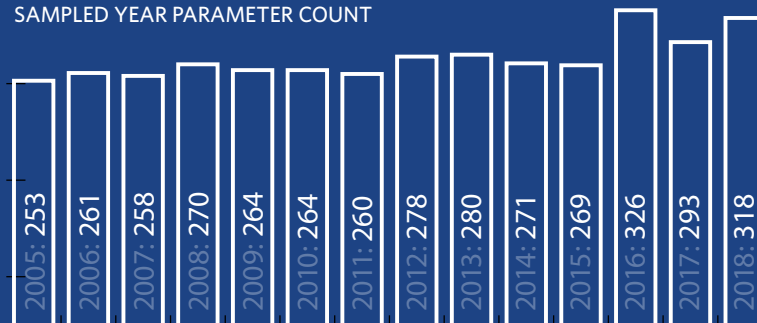
## FLUORIDE

State law requires Cal Water to add fluoride to drinking water if public funding is available to pay for it, and it is a practice endorsed by the American Medical Association and the American Dental Association to prevent tooth decay. In this area, local water is blended with purchased water that has fluoride in it. Show the table in this report to your dentist to see if he or she recommends giving your children fluoride supplements.

**More information about fluoridation, oral health, and related issues can be found on the DDW web site at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking\\_water/certlic/drinkingwater/Fluoridation.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/Fluoridation.html). For general information on water fluoridation, visit us online at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).**

### NUMBER OF CONSTITUENTS TESTED ANNUALLY SINCE 2005

SAMPLED YEAR PARAMETER COUNT



# Water Hardness

Hardness is a measure of the magnesium, calcium, and carbonate minerals in the water. Water is considered **soft** if its hardness is less than 75 parts per million (ppm), **moderately hard** at 75 to 150 ppm, **hard** between 150 and 300 ppm, and **very hard** at 300 ppm or higher.

Hard water is generally not a health concern, but it can have an impact on how well soap lathers and is significant for some industrial and manufacturing processes. Hard water may also lead to mineral buildup in pipes or water heaters.

Some people with hard water opt to buy a water softener for aesthetic reasons. However, some water softeners add salt to the water, which can cause problems at wastewater treatment plants. Additionally, people on low-sodium diets should be aware that some water softeners increase the sodium content of the water.

**For more information on water hardness, visit** [www.calwater.com/video/hardness](http://www.calwater.com/video/hardness).

Our testing equipment is so sensitive, it can detect mineral traces as small as 1 part per trillion.

**That is equivalent to 1 penny in 1 billion dollars.**



# Possible Contaminants

All 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 water poses a health risk.

**More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.**

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) 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 human activity.

## CONTAMINANTS THAT MAY BE PRESENT IN SOURCE WATER INCLUDE:

**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, which 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 byproducts 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 the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA and DDW prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised people, such as those with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, those who have undergone organ transplants, and those with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders; some elderly people; and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water. EPA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline.

# About Lead

## TESTING FOR LEAD IN SCHOOLS

The State of California now requires that all public schools built before 2010 test for lead in their drinking water by July 1, 2019. We are committed to supporting our school districts' efforts to protect students and ensure that the drinking water at their school sites are below lead limits. We have been working with school districts serving kindergarten through 12th grade to develop sampling plans, test samples, and conduct follow-up monitoring for corrective actions. We have published a summary of local school lead testing from the last year in this year's Water Quality report. For more information, please see our Testing for Lead in Schools [web page](#).

As the issue of lead in water continues to be top of mind for many Americans, Cal Water wants to assure you about the quality of your water. We are compliant with health and safety codes mandating use of lead-free materials in water system replacements, repairs, and new installations. We have no known lead service lines in our systems. We test and treat (if necessary) water sources to ensure that the water delivered to customer meters meets all water quality standards and is not corrosive toward plumbing materials.

The water we deliver to your home meets lead standards, but what about your home's plumbing? In California, lead in drinking water comes primarily from materials and components used for in-home plumbing (for example, lead solder used to join copper plumbing, and brass and other lead-containing fixtures).

The lead and copper rule requires us to test water inside a representative number of homes that have plumbing most likely to contain lead and/or lead solder to determine the presence of lead and copper or an action level exceedance (AL). An action level is the concentration of a contaminant which, when exceeded, triggers corrective actions before it becomes a health concern. If action levels are exceeded, either at a customer's home or system-wide, we work with the customer to investigate the issue and/or implement corrosion control treatment to reduce lead levels.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Cal Water is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water to our customers' meters, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. 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 are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested by a lab. More information about lead in drinking water can be found on the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

**In your system, results from our lead monitoring program, conducted in accordance with the Lead and Copper Rule, were below the action level for the presence of lead.**

# Key Definitions

## MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL (MCL)

The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs protect public health and are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as are economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs (SMCLs) relate to the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

## IN COMPLIANCE

Does not exceed any applicable primary MCL, secondary MCL, or action level, as determined by DDW. For some compounds, compliance is determined by averaging the results for one source over a one-year period.

## REGULATORY ACTION LEVEL (AL)

The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other required action by the water provider.

## 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 are set by the EPA.

## 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.

## NOTIFICATION LEVEL (NL)

A health-based advisory level for an unregulated contaminant in drinking water. It is used by DDW to provide guidance to drinking water systems.

## PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD (PDWS)

MCLs and MRDLs for contaminants that affect health, along with their monitoring, reporting, and water treatment requirements.

## PUBLIC HEALTH GOAL (PHG)

The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment without regard to cost or available detection and treatment technologies.

## TREATMENT TECHNIQUE (TT)

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.



# Table Introduction

**CAL WATER TESTS YOUR WATER FOR MORE THAN 140 REGULATED CONTAMINANTS AND DOZENS OF UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS. THIS TABLE LISTS ONLY THOSE CONTAMINANTS THAT WERE DETECTED.**

In the table, water quality test results are divided into four major sections: “Primary Drinking Water Standards,” “Secondary Drinking Water Standards,” “State Regulated Contaminants with Notification Levels,” and “Unregulated Compounds.” Primary standards protect public health by limiting the levels of certain constituents in drinking water. Secondary standards are set for substances that don’t impact health but could affect the water’s taste, odor, or appearance. Some unregulated substances (hardness and sodium, for example) are included for your information. The State allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old.

## SUBSTANCE SOURCES

DI	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
DS	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment
EF	Discharge from electroplating factories, leather tanneries, wood preservation, chemical synthesis, refractory production, and textile manufacturing facilities
EN	Naturally present in the environment
ER	Erosion of natural deposits
FE	Human and animal waste
FL	Water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
FR	Runoff and leaching from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks and sewage
IC	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems
IM	Discharge from industrial manufacturers
IN	Runoff/leaching from insecticide used on cotton and cattle
IO	Substances that form ions when in water
IW	Industrial waste
OD	Discharges of oil-drilling waste and from metal refineries
OM	Naturally occurring organic materials
PH	Inherent characteristic of water
RL	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
SO	Soil runoff
SW	Seawater influence
VA	Various natural and manmade sources
WD	Leaching from wood preservatives
UR	Unregulated constituents with no source listed and that do not have standardized “source of substance” language

# 2018 Water Quality

## Primary Drinking Water Standards

## Surface Water SFPUC Supply<sup>1</sup>

Microbiological	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Highest Monthly		Highest Monthly		Source
Total coliform (systems with >40 samples/month) (total coliform rule)	2018	positive samples	5%	(0)	Yes	1.06		n/a		EN
Giardia lamblia <sup>2</sup>	2018	cyst/L	TT	(0)	Yes	n/a		0–0.24	0.03	FE
Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source
Barium	2018	ppm	1	2	Yes	0.1	0.1	n/a	n/a	ER, OD
Fluoride	2018	ppm	2.0	1	Yes	0.25	0.25	ND–0.7	0.3	ER, FL
Lead and Copper	Year Tested	Unit	AL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Distribution System-Wide				Source
						90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile		Samples > AL		
Copper (Bear Gulch)	2018	ppm	1.3	0.3	Yes	ND		0 of 32		IC, ER, WD
Lead (Bear Gulch)	2018	ppb	15	0.2	Yes	ND		0 of 32		IC, ER, IM
Copper (Woodside)	2018	ppm	1.3	0.3	Yes	0.15		0 of 21		IC, ER, WD
Lead (Woodside)	2018	ppb	15	0.2	Yes	8.37		0 of 21		IC, ER, IM
Schools that requested lead sampling in 2018: 8										
Disinfection Byproducts	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Distribution System-Wide				Source
						Range		Highest Annual Average		
Haloacetic acids	2018	ppb	60	n/a	Yes	23–47		34.5		DI
Total trihalomethanes	2018	ppb	80	n/a	Yes	25.1–50.9		40.2		DI
Disinfectants	Year Tested	Unit	MRDL	MRDLG	In Compliance	Distribution System-Wide				Source
						Range		Average		
Chloramine	2018	ppm	4	4	Yes	0.2–3.2		2.39		DS

<sup>1</sup>SFPUC supply data reported is from 2018. The years prior to 2018 reflect Cal Water data.

<sup>2</sup>Giardia lamblia samples were collected from pretreated water. Giardia lamblia is inactivated through treatment technique.

# 2018 Water Quality

(Continued)

Surface Water—Turbidity and TOC	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Surface Water		SFPUC Supply		Source
						Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	
Turbidity (surface water not requiring filtration) <sup>3</sup>	2018	NTU	5	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	1.8	n/a	SO
Turbidity (surface water requiring filtration) <sup>4</sup>	2018	NTU	TT	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	0.044	99	0.07	99.96	SO
	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source
Total organic carbon (TOC) <sup>5</sup>	2018	ppm	TT	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	2.6–2.7	2.65	1.2–2.9	2.2	VA

## Secondary Drinking Water Standards

## Surface Water SFPUC Supply

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source
Color	2018	Units	15	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	ND	ND	ND–7	ND	OM
Turbidity	2018	Units	5	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	0.1	0.1	ND–0.3	0.01	SO
Total dissolved solids	2018	ppm	1000	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	100	100	ND–144	82	RL
Specific conductance	2018	µS/cm	1600	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	430	430	29–221	154	SW, IN
Chloride	2018	ppm	500	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	10	10	ND–17	8.9	RL, SW
Sulfate	2018	ppm	500	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	20	20	0.9–29	16	RL, IW

<sup>3</sup>The turbidity standard for unfiltered supplies is 5 NTU. Turbidity is a measure of cloudiness of water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality. High turbidity can hinder the effectiveness of disinfectants.

<sup>4</sup>For surface water systems, the treatment technique dictates that the turbidity level of the filtered water be less than or equal to 0.2 NTU in 95% of measurements taken each month and not exceed 1 NTU at any time.

<sup>5</sup>TOC has no health effects; however, TOC provides a medium for the formation of disinfection byproducts. These byproducts include trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids. The treatment technique dictates that a removal ratio of 1 or higher must be achieved. Drinking water containing these byproducts in excess of the MCL may lead to adverse health effects such as liver, kidney, or nervous system problems, and may lead to an increased risk of cancer. Concerns regarding disinfection byproducts are based upon exposure over many years.



# 2018 Water Quality

(Continued)

## State-Regulated Contaminants with Notification Levels

### Surface Water

### SFPUC Supply

Chemical	Year Tested	Unit	NL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source
Boron	2018	ppm	1	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	ND–0.10	ND	UR
Chlorate	2018	ppb	800	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	42–230	124	UR
Hexavalent chromium <sup>6</sup>	2018	ppb	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	0.031–0.1	0.068	ER, EF

## Unregulated Compounds

### Surface Water

### SFPUC Supply

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	In Compliance	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source
Calcium	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	50	50	2.9–18	11	ER
Magnesium	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	12	12	ND–6.2	4.0	ER
Strontium	2018	ppb	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	350	350	12–199	99	ER
pH	2018	Units	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	8.2	8.2	8.6–9.8	9.4	PH
Hardness	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	180	180	15–68	47	ER
Sodium	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	31	31	2.3–20	14	ER
Alkalinity (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> )	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	120	120	ND–132	51	ER
Bromide	2018	ppb	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	ND–27	7	ER
Silica	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	n/a	n/a	2.8–7.1	5.0	ER
Potassium	2018	ppm	n/a	n/a	<b>Yes</b>	ND	ND	0.2–1.0	0.6	ER

The Bear Gulch system, operated by Cal Water, received a tier 2 monitoring violation from the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water last year. Cal Water monitors drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis to confirm that the water served to customers continues to meet health standards. During the second quarter of 2018, a sample inadvertently was not collected for 1,2,3-trichloropropane (TCP) from the source surface water, which was a violation of drinking water regulations. While TCP is mainly found in groundwater, the regulation requires initial quarterly monitoring of surface water sources for four quarters. Although a sample was not collected for TCP testing during the second quarter of 2018, first-, third-, and fourth-quarter testing showed no detection of TCP in the raw surface water. The Bear Gulch treatment plant was not running to system in the second quarter and all water was received from SFPUC during this time.

<sup>6</sup>The previous MCL of 0.010 mg/L (10 ppb) for hexavalent chromium was withdrawn on September 11, 2017, and there is currently no MCL in effect. The state recommends that any hexavalent chromium results above the detection limit of 1 ppb be reported.

# Thank you.

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about your water quality! Even more information awaits you at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).

Visit our web site to get information about your account, water use history, water rates, and water system.

**You will also find water-saving tips and news about water conservation programs and rebates available in your area.**



- > Conservation resources
- > Lead in water
- > Water treatment and disinfection
- > Protecting the water supply