



# Frequently Asked Questions Trihalomethanes (THMs)

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## **What are Trihalomethanes or THMs?**

Trihalomethanes (THMs) are formed in drinking water that's been disinfected with chlorine. The chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic materials in our source waters, creating THMs.

## **What is Scottsdale doing to minimize or reduce THMs?**

Scottsdale Water Resources is continually working to reduce THMs throughout the city. We regularly monitor and test THM levels and flush water lines as needed to keep water fresh throughout the system. In the past few years, Water Resources has implemented new technologies at our water treatment plants to help minimize THMs throughout our drinking water distribution system.

## **Does Scottsdale comply with all regulatory mandates for THMs set by the EPA?**

Yes. Scottsdale meets or surpasses all THM requirements set by the EPA. Currently, the maximum allowable level for THMs set by the EPA is based on a system-wide running average, not individual results or areas. However, beginning in 2013, new regulations will require that each location's running annual average be below the maximum allowable level. The city is prepared to meet the new standard.

## **Why would some areas of the city have higher THM levels than others?**

There are a variety of reasons why some areas of the city would have different THM levels than others including:

- The amount of naturally occurring organics in the source water (These organics can vary for a several reasons, such as forest fires in our watershed.)
- High (warm) water temperatures
- The length and time the water is in the distribution lines
- Living in areas of the city where there is low water demand

Also, THM levels can be sporadic throughout the city. One area could have higher levels now than it did a few years ago, or vice versa.

## **Should I be concerned about THM levels?**

The health effects of THMs in humans is still being researched. There is evidence indicating that ingesting large amounts of THMs (2 liters of water every day for 70 years) may cause liver, kidney or intestinal problems in humans. The potential health impacts are based upon long term exposure to high levels of THMs.