



FACT SHEET

Communications & Public Affairs • 7522 E. 1st Street • Scottsdale, AZ 85251 • (480) 312-2335 • (480) 312-7780 fax

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Trihalomethanes (THMs) in water supplies

What are THMs?

THMs are formed when chlorine added to our tap water for disinfection purposes reacts with naturally occurring organic materials in our source waters.

Has Scottsdale met the Environmental protection Agency (EPA) maximum contaminant levels (MCLs)?

Yes. The city of Scottsdale has met all THM MCL requirements and takes all regulatory standards very seriously because our job is to help protect the health of our customers. Scottsdale does not determine those standards, but is required to test for them and comply with them by the EPA.

Compliance with the THM MCL's is currently based on a system wide running annual average, not individual results, as determined by the EPA. The EPA recently issued new drinking water rules that will result in changing the MCL for THMs to a locational running annual average starting in the year 2013. The evolution of such rule changes is much the same as many other consumer products. Water Resources has planned considerable investment in treatment process in advance of the rule change. Plant technology and water quality improvements to help minimize THM's will be complete within the next 1 to 4 years and will cost over \$60 million.

Why would some areas of the city have higher THM levels than other areas?

- Levels of organics in some of Scottsdale's source waters have been high due to forest fires and vegetation die off in the watershed.
- High temperatures of the water
- The length of time in the distribution lines
- Living in areas with low demand

What is Scottsdale doing to minimize THMs?

- proactive disinfection management
- assessing system-wide flow of water
- changes to our treatment process

Should residents be concerned about THM levels?

The health effects of THMs in humans are not fully known. There is evidence that ingesting large amounts of THMs may cause liver, kidney and intestinal cancer in experimental animals. There may be an increased risk of liver or kidney cancer in humans after 70 years of high THM exposure. Essentially, a resident would have to drink two liters of water that is impacted with high levels of THMs every day for 70 years to reach a level of concern. And,

high levels of THMs are sporadic. A THM hot spot now may not have been one ten years ago and we are working to have no hot spots in the future. The potential health impact of high THM levels is based upon long term exposure.

How can I get more information about our water quality?

Call Scottsdale Water Quality at 480-312-8732 or see our Water Quality Report at scottsdaleaz.gov/water/quality