



ANNUAL  
WATER  
QUALITY  
REPORT

*Water testing performed in 2008*



PWS ID#: 4010009

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

## Meeting the Challenge

We are once again proud to present to you our annual water quality report. This edition covers all testing completed from January 1 through December 31, 2008. Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to producing drinking water that meets or exceeds all state and federal drinking water standards. We continually strive to adopt new and better methods for delivering the best quality drinking water to you. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, we remain vigilant in meeting the challenges of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users.

Please share with us your thoughts about the information in this report. After all, well-informed customers are our best allies.

## Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants may be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The U.S. EPA/CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Information on the Internet

The U.S. EPA Office of Water ([www.epa.gov/watrhome](http://www.epa.gov/watrhome)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Web sites provide a substantial amount of information on many issues relating to water resources, water conservation, and public health. Also, the Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management has a Web site (<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/DWP.aspx>) that provides complete and current information on water issues in California, including valuable information about our watershed. Other Utility Department information can be found on the City's Web site (<http://www.slocity.org/utilities/index.asp>).

## Community Participation

City council meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, California. A public comment period is held at the beginning of each meeting.

## Where Does My Water Come From?


The City of San Luis Obispo is fortunate to have several sources of water. The Salinas Reservoir (also known as Santa Margarita Lake, eight miles east of Santa Margarita) is our primary source of water, with Whale Rock Reservoir (Cayucos) being our secondary, backup supply. The surface water from the two lakes is treated at the Stenner Creek Water Treatment Plant. At present, well water is used to meet a small percentage—less than two percent—of the city's demand for water. The active well is the Pacific Beach Well #1 (Los Osos Valley Road). During 2008 our treatment plant and wells delivered 2.2 billion gallons of water to San Luis Obispo.

## Substances That Could Be in Water

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

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the State Department of Public Health (Department) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Department regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. 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.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:



**Microbial Contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife;

**Inorganic Contaminants**, such as salts and metals, that can be naturally occurring or can result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;

**Pesticides and Herbicides**, that 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 by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and which can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural applications, and septic systems;

**Radioactive Contaminants**, that can be naturally occurring or can be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Questions?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Dean Furukawa, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor, at (805) 781-7566.

## Stormwater Runoff Affects Water Quality

Runoff from our urban areas affects the water quality in our creeks and the ocean. Anything that enters a storm drain ends up in our creeks and eventually flows untreated to the ocean. Although you may think the impact of one person or business is insignificant, the combined pollution of an entire city is monumental. Here are a few ways that you can help stop polluted runoff:

- Avoid over watering your lawn. Dirt, chemicals, and clippings can wash into the storm drain.
- Do not wash debris from the driveway and sidewalks into the gutter.
- Pick up after your pets. Pet waste can harm aquatic life as it decomposes in our waterways. Dispose of pet waste in the trash.
- Drain your swimming pool or spa to the sewer, never to the gutter.
- Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes such as automobile fluids, paints, and fertilizers by taking them to the household collection center at Cold Canyon Landfill.
- Maintain your cars to prevent fluids from dripping onto the streets and your driveway.
- When doing minor or major construction projects around your home or business, properly contain and dispose of all construction wastes.
- Place your yard waste into a green waste bin or into a compost pile.
- If you live next to a creek, don't dispose of yard waste, pet waste, excess dirt, or BBQ ashes on the creek bank.
- Cover your trash cans to prevent trash from blowing into the storm drains and creek.



**REMEMBER: ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN!**

## Source Water Assessment

An assessment of the drinking water sources for the City of San Luis Obispo was conducted in July 2001. The surface water sources, Salinas Reservoir and Whale Rock Reservoir, are considered most vulnerable to the following activities although no associated contaminants have been detected: cattle grazing and historic mining activities. To request a summary of the assessment, contact Kurt Souza, District Engineer, Santa Barbara District, at (805) 566-1326, or the City of San Luis Obispo at (805) 781-7215.

A copy of the complete assessment is available from Department of Health Services, 1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 200, Carpinteria, California 93013; or the City of San Luis Obispo, 879 Morro Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401.

## Lead and Drinking Water

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. We are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water 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. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).



## Sampling Results

During the past year we have taken hundreds of water samples in order to determine the presence of any radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic, or synthetic organic contaminants. The table below shows only those substances that were detected in the water. Numerous other substances were tested for but were not detected and will not appear in the table below. Some of those substances not detected include, but are not limited to, arsenic, asbestos, cyanide, and methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE). Although all of the substances listed here are under the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), we feel it is important that you know exactly what was detected and how much of the substance was present in the water. The State requires us to monitor for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

### REGULATED SUBSTANCES<sup>1</sup>

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	PHG (MCLG) [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Aluminum (ppm)	2008	1	0.6	0.137	ND–0.310	No	Erosion of natural deposits; residue from some surface water treatment processes
Barium (ppm)	2008	1	2	0.082	0.049–0.114	No	Discharges of oil drilling wastes and from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	2008	[4.0 (as Cl <sub>2</sub> )]	[4 (as Cl <sub>2</sub> )]	0.80	0.10–1.10	No	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment
Chromium (ppb)	2008	50	(100)	7.5	ND–15	No	Discharge from steel and pulp mills and chrome plating; erosion of natural deposits
Control of DBP precursors [TOC] <sup>2</sup> (% removal)	2008	TT	NA	19	ND–38	No	Various natural and man-made sources
Fluoride <sup>3</sup> (ppm)	2008	2.0	1	0.72	0.2–1.0	No	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Gross Alpha Particle Activity (pCi/L)	2005	15	(0)	0.58	ND–1.16	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Haloacetic Acids <sup>4</sup> (ppb)	2008	60	NA	16.0	2.0–70.0	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nickel (ppb)	2008	100	12	1.5	1.0–2.0	No	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from metal factories
Nitrate [as nitrate] (ppm)	2008	45	45	4.77	ND–7.4	No	Runoff and leaching from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks and sewage; erosion of natural deposits
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] <sup>4</sup> (ppb)	2008	80	NA	51.1	34.9–126.0	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Turbidity <sup>5</sup> (NTU)	2008	TT	NA	0.08	0.06–0.08	No	Soil runoff

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2007	1.3	0.3	0.159	0/30	No	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives
Lead (ppb)	2007	15	2	1.9	0/30	No	Internal corrosion of household water plumbing systems; discharges from industrial manufacturers; erosion of natural deposits

### SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Aluminum (ppb)	2008	200	NS	137	ND–310	No	Erosion of natural deposits; residual from some surface water treatment processes
Chloride (ppm)	2008	500	NS	25	21–28	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; seawater influence
Specific Conductance (micromhos)	2008	1,600	NS	659	526–792	No	Substances that form ions when in water; seawater influence
Sulfate (ppm)	2008	500	NS	52	23–80	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Total Dissolved Solids (ppm)	2008	1,000	NS	380	310–450	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits

<sup>1</sup>We were required by the U.S. EPA to conduct an evaluation of our distribution system. This is known as an Initial Distribution System Evaluation (IDSE) and is intended to identify locations in our distribution system that have elevated disinfection by-product concentrations. Disinfection by-products (e.g., HAAs and TTHMs) result from continuous disinfection of drinking water and form when disinfectants combine with organic matter that naturally occurs in the source water.

<sup>2</sup>Total organic carbon (TOC) has no health effects. However, TOC provides a medium for the formation of disinfection by-products such as TTHMs and HAA5s. The City's TOC reduction requirement varies from 15 percent to 25 percent on a running annual average calculated quarterly, with an actual monthly reduction ranging from 0 percent to 38 percent.

<sup>3</sup>The City currently adds fluoride to the treated water produced by the water treatment plant to achieve an optimum target residual of 0.8 ppm. Some limited areas in the city along Los Osos Valley Road receive a blend of surface water and groundwater that may have a lower fluoride residual, from 0.2 ppm to 0.8 ppm.

<sup>4</sup>Amount reported is the running annual average of quarterly samples.

<sup>5</sup>Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system. During the reporting year, 100 percent of all samples taken to measure turbidity met water quality standards.

## Definitions

**AL (Regulatory Action Level):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

**Amount Detected:** The average of the total actual analyses.

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

**MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the U.S. EPA.

**micromhos:** A measure of electrical conductance.

**MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level):** The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment that may not be exceeded at the customer's tap.

**MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal):** The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs are set by the U.S. EPA.

**NA:** Not applicable.

**ND (Not detected):** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

**NS:** No standard.

**NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units):** Measurement of the clarity, or turbidity, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

**pCi/L (picocuries per liter):** A measure of radioactivity.

**PDWS (Primary Drinking Water Standard):** MCLs and MRDLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements.

**PHG (Public Health Goal):** 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 EPA.

**ppb (parts per billion):** One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

**ppm (parts per million):** One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

**Range:** The lowest and highest actual analyses.

**TT (Treatment Technique):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.