



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 71-10-EPO

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OVERSIGHT

INFORMATION REGARDING ARSENIC IN WELLS LOCATED IN COACHELLA VALLEY

Arsenic is one of the substances that can be found naturally occurring in Coachella Valley's ground water supply. Some wells in parts of the lower Coachella Valley such as Mecca, Oasis, Thermal and North Shore produce water with elevated levels of arsenic. Below is more information about arsenic and answers to common questions regarding arsenic in well water.

Q: What is Arsenic?

Arsenic is a naturally occurring mineral found in plants, animals, rocks, soil and water. It is odorless and cannot be tasted.

Q: Is arsenic harmful to me and my family?

Water with elevated arsenic is considered safe for non-consumptive uses such as washing and bathing, as long as it meets other potable water standards.

Concentrations of arsenic found in the Coachella Valley will not cause acute arsenic poisoning, however, arsenic is a known carcinogen (a cancer-causing agent). Some people who drink water with elevated levels of arsenic for many years could have an increased risk of developing cancer or experience health issues such as problems with their circulatory system

Q: What are "elevated levels"?

According to State and Federal standards, arsenic levels in drinking water should not be above 10 parts per billion (ppb). Wells in the lower Coachella Valley can range from 0 ppb to 100 ppb.

Q: How do I know if there is arsenic in my water?

If you are a customer of a public or private water system, you can request the most recent water quality report from your water provider. If you own a private well or unregulated water system (less than 4 connections), you should have your water tested annually for bacteria, and anything else that is a concern (like arsenic). Contact Riverside County Department of Environmental Health at 760-863-7570 for a list of certified laboratories that are qualified to do such testing.

Q: What do I do if I find I have elevated arsenic levels in my water?

There are reasonably priced water treatment systems that you can have installed to lower arsenic levels.

For more information or a list of NSF certified water treatment systems, contact the National Sanitation Foundation at 877-8-NSF-HELP, visit their website at www.nsf.org, or confirm with the manufacturer of your water treatment system that the unit is NSF approved for the removal of arsenic.

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS

For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org