



Recycled Water FAQs for Landscape Irrigation Workers

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Is recycled water safe?

A. YES! Recycled water is safe for a variety of intended uses. Recycled water is *not* intended for drinking or for cooking. Recycled water must meet stringent, protective, and conservative standards set by the California Department of Public Health or a recycled water agency will not be granted regulatory approval to supply recycled water. If a batch of recycled water temporarily does not meet standards, it cannot be put into the recycled water distribution system to be used by customers.

Q. How do I know it's safe?

A. Recycled water is tested at least once a day for total coliform bacteria to ensure that it has been adequately disinfected. Also, testing equipment and a recorder automatically and continuously monitor recycled water at the water recycling treatment plant. An alarm system alerts a trained plant operator if the recycled water does not meet treatment standards and the recycled water is either sent through the treatment process again until standards are met or is discharged in accordance with regulations.

Q. What's the safety record for recycled water?

A. Unblemished! California adopted water reuse regulations in 1918 and continually monitors and improves recycled water standards and requirements, with the most recent standards for non-potable reuse being adopted in 2000. There have been no documented diseases, illnesses, or other adverse public health problems traced to the proper and allowed uses of recycled water that meets regulatory requirements since the first municipal use of recycled water began in 1912. Recycled water is continuously monitored and tested to ensure that its quality is appropriate and safe for specific permitted uses that require different levels of treatment. Similarly, other states and countries with water recycling regulations as protective as California's have experienced no adverse health effects from proper use of disinfected tertiary-treated recycled water, including Florida, Japan, Australia, and several European countries.

Q. What happens if recycled water splashes on me?

A. You'll get wet. There have been no reported instances of skin rashes resulting from contact with recycled water.

Q. What if I get recycled water in my eyes?

A. Recycled water is highly disinfected, so the chlorine *may* cause a mild burning sensation, just as if you opened your eyes while under water in a swimming pool. If you get recycled water in your eyes and feel any discomfort, rinse your eyes with potable water or use eyes drops.

Q. What if recycled water comes into contact with a cut or abrasion on my skin?

A. As a precaution, clean the affected area with soap and potable water or an antiseptic towelette, apply an antibiotic ointment, and cover with a bandage.

Q. Will I need to use a special set of tools when I'm working on the recycled water system?

A. No.

Q. Whom should I contact with any additional questions or concerns?

A. Please contact EBMUD Office of Water Recycling at (510) 287-1631 or via email at reuseh2o@ebmud.com.