



City of Phoenix
WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Q&A **Arsenic**

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Background: The majority of the City of Phoenix drinking water supply is from surface water sources. Groundwater represents less than four percent of the total source water in use. Arsenic in surface water is effectively removed during the treatment process. Any wells the City uses as a source for drinking water that have a naturally occurring arsenic level greater than 80 percent of the EPA drinking water standard of 10 ppb have either been equipped with arsenic treatment facilities or taken out of service.

1. What is arsenic?

Arsenic is an element that occurs naturally in rocks and soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Volcanic activity, the erosion of rocks and minerals, and forest fires are natural sources that can release arsenic into the environment. Arsenic is a result of natural activities and not the result of man-made contamination.

2. Is it safe to drink water containing arsenic?

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for arsenic in drinking water is 10 parts per billion (ppb).

3. What is Phoenix doing to protect its water customers?

Phoenix's goal is to reduce the arsenic level even lower than the EPA requirement...to 80% of the EPA's 10 ppb standard, or 8 parts per billion. To accomplish this, Phoenix has installed nearly a dozen full scale arsenic treatment facility (ATF) operations at groundwater well locations. In fact, the very first permanent full scale ATF installed in the United States is in Phoenix.

4. What other procedures take place to protect my drinking water?

Phoenix performs millions of measurements and tests each year, at the treatment plants, groundwater wells, and throughout the distribution system to ensure your safety.