



What is a Legal Water Supply?

Placer County recognizes the following as a legal potable water supply:

1. **Connection to a permitted public water system.** Public water systems are required to provide safe, potable water, in adequate quantities pursuant to the California Safe Drinking Water Act. Under these regulations, the water has been tested and is required to be treated if necessary to meet drinking water standards. Contact this office to find out which public water supplier is closest to your home.
2. **Individual on-site permitted water well.** When it is not feasible to connect to a public water supply, such as in rural areas, a well can be drilled. Water wells must be drilled by a licensed well driller to ensure that they are constructed in accordance to current standards. These standards help protect the groundwater source and prevent a well from being drilled close to potentially contaminating zones such as areas with a septic tank or livestock enclosure.

Homes on Untreated Surface Water

If the domestic water supply for your home is untreated surface water such as raw water from a lake, river, stream, creek, or ditch it's important to understand that Placer County does not recognize your water supply as "potable." Not only are there major health risks drinking untreated surface water, but you may need to consider additional circumstances if you are renting, selling or renovating your home.

- Under the Uniform Housing Code which mainly applies to renters, a potable water supply is required. A landlord may be held liable if it is brought to the attention of the county that non-potable water is being supplied to a renter.
- If you are selling your home it's important to be aware that financial institutions will not lend money for a home that does not have a water supply approved by the county.
- Lastly, if you plan to renovate your home and need to pull a plumbing permit from the county, Environmental Health will be required to sign off that there is an approved potable water supply.



Health and Human Services

Environmental Health

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Health and Human Services

Environmental Health

LAKE, RIVER & DITCH WATER

IS IT LEGAL AND SAFE TO DRINK?

Important Information on
Untreated Surface Water





What is Surface Water?

Sources of drinking water can be divided into two categories: groundwater and surface water. Water in the ground comes from precipitation that has seeped down through the soil saturating layers of fractured rock, gravel or sand. A drilled well is placed to pump water from the ground to the surface.

Alternatively, surface water is found in lakes, rivers, streams and canals. Surface water is often used for irrigation purposes and is also treated for use as drinking water. There are several surface water sources serving Placer County including Lake Tahoe, Lake Spaulding, Rollins Lake, and the Yuba and Bear Rivers to name a few. Additionally, snowmelt from the Sierra is directed through PG&E and Placer County Water Agency managed canals. Many Placer County residents receive ditch water from these canals for irrigation purposes.

What are the Health Hazards?

The water from drilled wells is often potable without any treatment. Contaminants are naturally removed when the water slowly seeps through the soil to the aquifer below the surface. Surface water however can contain many contaminants from the

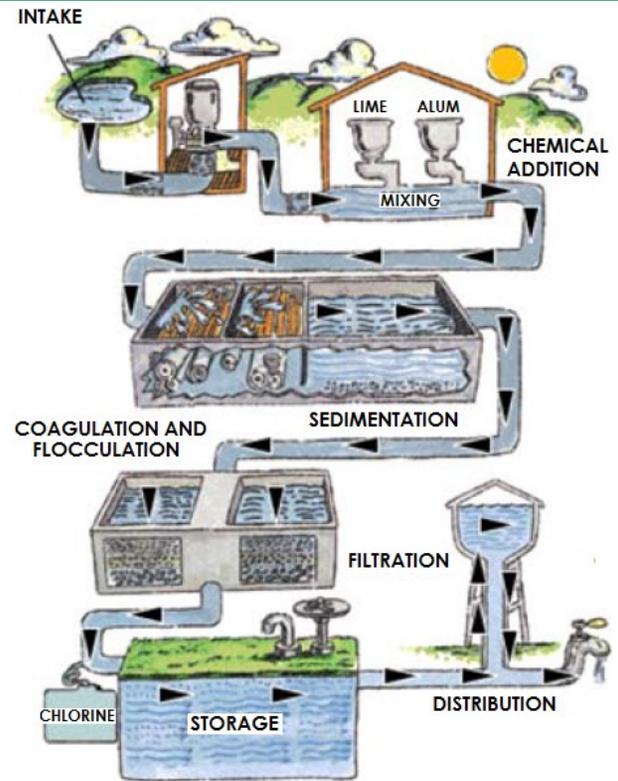
environment. Environmental contaminants that effect surface water sources in Placer County include contaminants from highways, roadways and railroads near rivers and canals, septic tanks, utility pipelines, upstream recreation, historic and active mining operations, utility operations and timber harvest. These activities could contribute to contaminants in the water such as sediment, bacteria, viruses, parasites, pesticides, herbicides, and trace metals. At certain levels, these contaminants can cause adverse health effects.

Surface Water Treatment

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. In order to meet drinking water standards, surface water from lakes, rivers and canals is required to undergo a complex treatment process which is monitored by state certified operators.

What about Home Treatment Systems?

It's important to understand that in-home water treatment systems are not safe or reliable. These small treatment units are not capable of removing all of the potential contaminants in surface water. Additionally, public water suppliers regularly sample and have their water tested for over one hundred different contaminants. It's just not feasible for an individual homeowner to conduct the same level of testing. Therefore, Placer County does not recognize lake, river or ditch water as a potable water supply for domestic use unless the supply is provided by a permitted public water system capable of treating the raw surface water to safe drinking water standards.



When is Potable Water Required?

Placer County has adopted the Uniform Plumbing Code. This code sets forth plumbing standards for habitable structures. The code requires that plumbing fixtures be supplied only with "potable" water that is safe for drinking and cooking. Placer County ordinances only recognize an individual permitted well or a connection to a public water system as a potable water supply.

NOTICE	
This water is safe to drink.	