

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | DRINKING WATER**

### **What does ADEQ regulate for drinking water?**

ADEQ regulates a Public Water System (PWS), which is defined as a water system providing water to at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or providing water to at least 25 year-round residents. A PWS is required to adhere to the drinking water safety requirements of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

### **What authority does ADEQ have over drinking water supply to homes and businesses in the area?**

For a new water system, they must demonstrate that they have a 100-year water supply (AAC R18-4-603(1)). However, for a new subdivision connecting to an existing water system, the developer must provide a statement (water service agreement) from the water system stating they can provide water to all the homes in the subdivision (AAC R18-5-406(B)).

For questions about water quantity, the best source of information is the Arizona Department of Water Resources | [View webpage >](#)

### **What is the Safe Drinking Water Act?**

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is the federal law that ensures the quality of drinking water. Under SDWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities and water suppliers who implement those standards. These standards are known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). Every PWS is required to meet SDWA standards.

### **What happens if there is an exceedance of SDWA standards?**

The PWS is required to address any contributing factors to the exceedance. In other words, they need to fix any issues that caused the exceedance. ADEQ has developed compliance and technical assistance programs and leads the Arizona Water Emergency Team (WET) to assist PWSs with addressing an exceedance or other drinking water system issue. A Drinking Water Public Notice will also be sent out to customers by the PWS. If the PWS does not distribute the notice, ADEQ will distribute it to customers.

### **What are nitrates?**

Nitrates are common inorganic compounds. Nitrates in drinking water can come from natural, industrial or agricultural sources (including septic systems and runoff). Levels of nitrates in drinking water can vary throughout the year.

### **What is recommended if there is a nitrate exceedance?**

A Public Notice would advise customers to not give water to infants (children under six months old), as it could cause Blue Baby Syndrome, and to not boil the water, as that could make the nitrates more concentrated.