

# Hard Water in Fountain Valley?



## What is Hard Water?

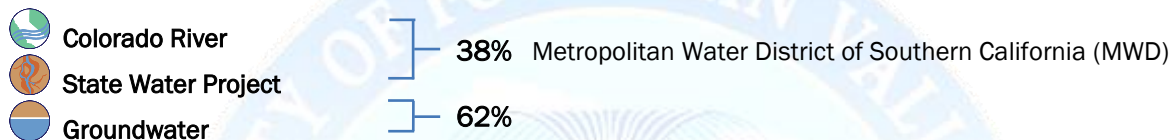
Hard water is becoming the most common water quality concern reported by residents in Fountain Valley. Water that is considered to be “hard” is high in dissolved calcium and magnesium. As the concentration of the dissolved minerals increase, the water becomes harder.

## Is Hard Water Safe to Drink?

Yes, hard water is safe to drink and to use for cooking and cleaning and is not a health risk. The California Department of Public Health and the US Environmental Protection Agency do not consider hard water a health issue and there are no standards or limits set for hardness, it is simply an aesthetic concern.

## Why is There an Increase in Hard Water in Fountain Valley?

Approximately 38% of the Fountain Valley water comes from the Colorado River and State Water Project from northern California. Due to water supply challenges over the past year, water from the State Water Project is no longer available.



Colorado River water is classified as very hard water. This past year, State Water Project supplies have been greatly reduced due to drought and environmental regulation. With no water from northern California to blend with the hard Colorado River, we have been receiving much harder water.

Fountain Valley local water supplies of groundwater provide approximately 62% of Fountain Valley’s water. Generally, Fountain Valley well water is not as hard as the Colorado River water but still contains hardness because of the naturally occurring calcium and magnesium in the underground aquifers. While hardness levels can vary throughout Fountain Valley due to blending with local groundwater supplies, water hardness in Fountain Valley averaged over 13 grains per gallon during 2009 and thus would be considered very hard water. Throughout the year the hardness levels in the water are varying between 9 and 23 grains per gallon with an annual average between 13 and 16 grains per gallon.

## What are Signs of Hard Water in My Home?

- White/chalky deposits on plumbing, tubs, sinks, fixtures, pots and pans
- Increased difficulty in cleaning and laundering tasks
- Decreased efficiency of water heaters
- White spots on glassware
- White spots on your car after washing
- Soap scum on bathtubs, shower tiles, and basins

## Is There Anything I Can Do to Remove Hardness?

The two most common processes to remove calcium and magnesium from the water are (1) reverse osmosis filtration, and (2) ion exchange. Reverse osmosis filtration units can handle only small volumes of water and are usually installed at the kitchen sink. Ion exchange units can treat large volumes of water and are typically installed to treat either all of the water entering the residence or just the hot water supply.

An alternative to a system softener or hot water softener is to use liquid and powdered softeners. These can be added to dishwashers or laundry machines on a per load basis to soften the water, reduce the amount of soap or detergent, and reduce spotting on dishware.

For a list of state certified water treatment devices, please go to the California Department of Public Health at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).