

NE FRESNO WATER FACT CHECK

The City of Fresno has been investigating reports of discolored water in NE Fresno and has held two community meetings to update residents on our findings. The City is committed to providing accurate and up to date information at all times to the residents in NE Fresno and across our community and correcting **false information** that has been reported online and in various forums.

In order to determine the full universe of homes experiencing discolored water, the City of Fresno mailed 45,397 post cards during the week of July 4 to residents in:

93650 758
93704 2,183
93710 5,693
93711 10,635
93720 12,661
93722 8,955
93730 4,242

The post cards provided residents in these Zip Codes the opportunity to report discolored water conditions to the City by phone (559-621-8610), by email (RequestWaterTest@Fresno.Gov), or by completing an online survey.

As of July 26, 2016, the City had received the following responses from the postcard distribution:

- 833 customers responded to the online survey. 791 reported discolored water at an indoor plumbing fixture in their home.
 - 42 responses reported they were not experiencing discolored water.
- 776 or 93.2% of all responses came from ZIP Codes 93710, 93720, and 93730 in NE Fresno.
 - The majority of those responses - 486 or 58.3% - came from 93720.
 - 172 or 20.6% came from 93710 and 118 or 14.2% came from 93730.
 - 9 responses came from Zip Codes that were not mailed to (93660, 93705, 93726, 93727.)
- 654 responses to the dedicated phone line (559-621-8626)
- 328 emails to the dedicated email address (RequestWaterTest@fresno.gov)

A number of residents used all three methods to communicate with the City about water concerns. The City is currently working through the survey responses, voicemails, and emails to determine the number of individual responses that used two or more methods.

FACT: Fresno's water supply is clean, safe, and reliable. The City's groundwater supply and surface water supply meets all federal and state drinking water standards, and is safe to drink.

FACT: The source of the discoloration is from corrosion found in galvanized pipes or lead-containing fixtures on private property.

- 95% of the homes in NE Fresno have not reported discoloration. To date, less than 1100 homes out of 22,596 in the zip codes 93710, 93720, and 93730 in NE Fresno have either been tested or reported discoloration.
- 279 homes and 838 faucets have been tested. 77 of the faucets, or 9%, have shown lead above the EPA action level.
- Not every fixture in those homes has discoloration.
- It's typically found in fixtures that are not frequently used - like in the guest bath.

FACT: Tests in some of the homes that have discolored water have reported lead levels above the EPA action level. We are working with the residents to help them determine the exact cause on their property and provide solutions to those homeowners, whether it's replacing fixtures or private plumbing systems. Knowing that there are some homes in NE Fresno built with galvanized pipes in the 1990s and 2000s, the City is also working to adjust the treatment of its groundwater and surface water. However, in doing so, we don't want to start problems in more than 22,000 homes because we tried to fix discoloration issues in about 800 homes.

Here are the most often repeated inaccurate statements about the discolored water issue in NE Fresno:

STATEMENT: "24% of homes in NE Fresno with discolored water have tested positive for lead."

FACT: To date, we have tested 838 faucets in 279 homes. Only 77 faucets - **only 9.1%** - showed lead above the EPA Action Level.

As of July 26, only 4 of those faucets were in the kitchen, so the actual percentage of active faucets providing drinking water to homes that tested positive for lead is **less than ½ of 1%**.

STATEMENT: "According to the EPA's records, the City of Fresno failed to test their water in 2015 as per legal requirements. Nothing shows up since 2012 in their files."

FACT: The City of Fresno tested its water as required by state and federal law and submitted our 2015 Lead and Copper Rule data to the State Water Resources Control Board, which handles administration for the EPA. They have confirmed we are in compliance.

STATEMENT: “Please let us know what is being done to help the hundreds of families that are desperately seeking water testing and currently waiting 6 weeks to get their water tested and receive the results.”

FACT: There are currently 120 homes waiting to be tested. Because we have to test the water after it’s been sitting overnight or during the workday, we work closely with the customer to schedule a convenient time to test. Due to the surge of calls after the June 14 meeting, it takes 2-3 weeks to find a suitable testing date.

STATEMENT: “It’s obvious that the problems with discolored water began only after the NE Surface Water Treatment Plant went online in 2004.”

FACT: The City has yet to identify a repeatable pattern or trend that would explain why some homes started experiencing discolored water 10 years before the City’s water plant was placed into service, and why some homes have been experiencing discoloration in just the last 2-3 years. Some homes that have been tested and re-tested have performed better on surface water than on groundwater. Others have performed better on groundwater. So, the source of the water supply does not seem to be the predictor of discolored water. The common thread to date has been the presence of galvanized pipes.

STATEMENT: “Homes without discolored water are still testing positive for lead.”

FACT: There is no water quality sampling and testing data that shows a home with clear water showing lead above the EPA action level.

STATEMENT: “Six elementary schools in NE Fresno tested positive for lead.”

FACT: No samples collected at elementary schools in NE Fresno were above the EPA Action Level of 15 parts per billion. A total of 30 water quality samples were collected from six elementary schools in NE Fresno (5 samples per school,) and were tested for Lead and Copper. 26 of them reported as Non-Detect for Lead, and the remaining four samples from three of the six schools were all well below EPA Action Level of 15 ug/L. We are already working with Clovis Unified School District to have the remainder of their elementary schools in NE Fresno tested, but the State’s testing protocol requires that the testing occur during normal operations of the school site. Once the schools are back in session, the City will be able to finish testing the remaining school sites in NE Fresno.

STATEMENT: “The City needs to declare a State of Emergency in NE Fresno and contact every home to let them know of the dangers and the possibilities of lead poisoning “

FACT: There is no emergency because the vast majority of lead hits were at faucets that are rarely used and subject to stagnation. In those instances, the City is working with property owners to encourage them to change fixtures and make changes to the plumbing on their property that is likely the source of the discoloration.

STATEMENT: “I understand that the State of California is making funds available for the City of Fresno to provide bottled water to those citizens whose homes have high lead levels.”

FACT: The City is in continuous communication with representatives from the State regarding our investigation and the State is not making funds available to the City for this issue.

STATEMENT: “This is just like Flint!”

FACT: There are no similarities between the source of contamination in Flint and the source of discolored water in Fresno.

- Flint’s water delivery system is lead-based, from the mains to the service lines right up to the house fixtures. Fresno’s water delivery system uses copper or non-metallic pipes right up to the meter at your house.
- Flint used no corrosion inhibitors when it switched its water supply to start using Flint River water, which is polluted and has high levels of bacteria. Fresno has always used corrosion inhibitors in NE Fresno for its surface water.
- For the past 7 months, the City of Fresno and the Department of Public Utilities have been working with hundreds of residents, in cooperation with the State Water Resource Control Board and the Fresno County Department of Health, to help residents come up with solutions to the problem of discolored water in their homes in NE Fresno.