

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## About Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Water Supply



Providing safe and reliable water is the ultimate goal and priority of Santa Fe Irrigation District (SFID) as well as the health and safety of our workers and community as we conduct operations amid COVID-19.

As a precautionary measure, the District has restricted public access to all of our facilities. We continue to have our customer service representatives available by phone and email. Under the current circumstances, however, some follow up responses may be delayed for up to 48 hours. Please be patient with us as we manage during this time in order to protect the health and safety of the public and the employees of the District.

Below are answers to questions you may have while SFID continues to sustain its operation under the guidelines from our Governor:

### **Q: IS OUR WATER SAFE FROM COVID-19?**

A: **Yes.** Coronavirus, COVID-19, does not present a threat to the safety of SFID's treated water supplies. SFID's multi-step water treatment process includes filtration, chlorine disinfection and other processes to eliminate pathogenic organisms, such as viruses (including coronaviruses) and bacteria. SFID is continuously monitoring and testing supplies throughout the treatment process, while maintaining uninterrupted operation in compliance with state and federal water quality standards. **In fact, the US EPA recommends that Americans continue to use and drink tap water as usual.**

According to the **Centers for Disease Control** and the **World Health Organization**, coronavirus is spread from person-to-person contact, not through water. It is spread by breathing or contacting respiratory droplets from an infected person and contacting surfaces contaminated with the virus.

### **Q: DOES SFID HAVE ENOUGH WATER SUPPLIES TO CARRY US THROUGH THE END OF THIS PANDEMIC?**

A: **Yes.** The District obtains its drinking water from two sources, locally from Lake Hodges and imported water purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority. Raw water from these two sources is treated at the R.E. Badger Filtration Plant. In addition to the imported raw water, the District can also receive drinking water treated at the Skinner Water Treatment Plant operated by the Metropolitan Water District.

### **Q: CAN SFID CONTINUE TREATING AND DELIVERING WATER IF COVID-19 SPREADS?**

A: SFID and its staff are taking the utmost care to keep our highly trained water treatment staff healthy while we ensure clean and safe water continues to flow to our customers' homes and businesses. To address the concern of maintaining a healthy workforce to operate the R.E. Badger Water Filtration Plant and other water infrastructure facilities, we have implemented a pandemic response plan which includes strict protocols, health & hygiene best practices and utilizing personal protective equipment to continue reliable water operations. SFID continues to have the ability to purchase drinking water from the Metropolitan Water District in the event a secondary drinking water source is needed.

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Further, SFID has made sure we have the necessary backup equipment, tools and treatment supplies in the event of disruptions to the supply chain for these items. SFID crews now operate on modified shifts to minimize risk of exposure to the COVID-19. Our administrative district staff are telecommuting from their home offices. Future Board meetings will be conducted virtually or telephonically.

## **Q: WHY ARE PEOPLE STOCKPILING BOTTLED WATER? DO I NEED TO DO THIS AS WELL?**

A: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, no. SFID will continue to treat and supply water to our customers that meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements, including disinfection of all viruses and other pathogens. To be prepared for other emergencies, general emergency preparedness does encourage a two-week supply of bottled water in the event of a supply disruption, such as an earthquake or other natural disaster.

## **Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE DIFFICULTY AFFORDING MY WATER BILL?**

A: Please contact our customer service line at (858) 756-2424 and we can offer options such as a deferred payment and waive a late penalty. Additionally, the District is currently not shutting off service to ensure the health and safety of our customers.

## **Q: HOW DO I REPORT A LEAK OR OTHER PROBLEM?**

A: To report a water leak or water outage or for immediate assistance, please call our offices at (858) 756-2424. You may also contact customer service at [customerservice@sfidwater.org](mailto:customerservice@sfidwater.org) during business hours. For non-emergency issues response times may be slower with modified staff, but continue to contact our staff to pay a bill or have any question answered.

*Thank you and be safe and healthy.*