Coachella Valley
Recycled Water Fact Sheet

What is recycled water?
California Water Code definition of recycled water is “water which, as a result of treatment of waste, is suitable for a direct beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur.” Recycled water is highly treated municipal wastewater that can be used for non-potable applications. It is virtually colorless and odorless, and is allowable for full-body human contact but not for human consumption. Recycled Water meets the strict standards of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.

Is using recycled water safe?
Yes. Recycled water is safe when the guidelines are followed and it is used for its intended purpose. Title 22 Chapter 3 Division 4 of the California Code of Regulations is a California Health law related to recycled water. In order to make sure that CVWD’s reclamation plants are meeting Title 22 standards, everyday a recycled water sample is collected and analyzed for total coliform bacteria. Also, chlorine residual, modal contact time, and turbidity are continuously monitored at the plants, which have state-of-the-art alarm system that can immediately suspend delivery if a problem occurs.

What happens if a child drinks recycled water?
Recycled water is not intended for drinking. Ingesting large quantities of recycled water over an extended period of time could cause adverse health effects. Just as children may swallow a small amount of water at a lake, beach or pool, they could swallow some recycled water without getting sick.

What happens if a pet drinks recycled water?
The water will be safer than if the pet drinks from a street gutter, ditch, or a pond. No harmful effects will occur.

What if recycled water gets into an open cut?
The cut should be cleaned just as would be the case after any fall.

Has anyone ever gotten sick from recycled water?
No. Although used throughout the country, there are no reported cases of illness from the use of recycled water.
What are the benefits of using recycled water?
There are several benefits to using recycled water. The most significant to the Coachella Valley is that it reduces the demand on the aquifer. It’s a drought proof source of water dependent on population. If severe drought conditions ever spark water restrictions or rationing, recycled water would be exempt.

The biggest benefit for golf courses is the economic benefit. Golf courses that use recycled water pay less for the water than it costs for pumping groundwater.

Recycled water contains higher concentrations of nutrients than groundwater and, therefore, the need for chemical fertilizers is reduced. Golf Course Superintendents using recycled water have mentioned that they can’t believe how green their courses are.

Finally, recycled water use can be viewed as a positive public relations tool. Being “green” is a concern of the public, not to mention the media. Recycled water users are good stewards of the earth and recycled water use is another means to prove it.

Where else is recycled water being used?
More than 5,000 sites throughout California are using recycled water. Several other states including Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Nevada, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and Virginia use recycled water. Not only that but other countries such as Israel, Australia, and Japan are using recycled water.

What can I do to support the recycled water program?
Show your support for recycled water by encouraging current users to continue the practice and new customers to come online when recycled water is available to them.

Encouraging recycled water use through education is also key to the success of the recycled water program. If you would like CVWD’s Nonpotable Water Operations Manager to come speak at your organization or facility, or if you would like a tour of one of our Water Reclamation Plants to see the recycle water process in person, please call (760) 398-2651 to set up an appointment.