



Fact Sheet

Frequently Asked Questions: Drinking water data gathering and interim water supplies in CV SALTS Early Action Plans

The following answers are for Frequently Asked Questions that have come up in development of Early Action Plans under CV SALTS (Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-term Sustainability). These FAQs provide direction in the development of adequate data gathering and interim water supply plans for addressing nitrate contaminated groundwater. The State Water Board intends the answers to provide guidance and set baseline expectations for use in the development of Early Action Plans.

Data Gathering for Residential Sampling Program

What constitutes the minimum requirement for an adequate sampling protocol?

Samples should be collected by personnel trained in proper sampling techniques, including proper chain of custody procedures.

Samples must be analyzed by an Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP)-accredited analytical laboratory using approved drinking water methodology.

Samples should be electronically submitted to the State Water Boards for inclusion in the GeoTracker database in the required format via electronic data transfer (EDT). This is a requirement for any samples collected under contract with the State Water Board.

For further information on the GeoTracker database, contact geotracker@waterboards.ca.gov or call 1-866-480-1028

How should sampling locations for domestic wells be identified?

Data collected on domestic wells should be gathered in a format that is compatible with the State Water Board GeoTracker system. A latitude/longitude or another accurate location measurement is needed to enter the water well laboratory test results with the well location. No personal information associated with the well, including well owner name and residence address, will be made publicly available. For assistance with uploading well data into GeoTracker, contact the Help Desk at geotracker@waterboards.ca.gov or call 1-866-480-1028.

How should an adequate combination of physical sampling versus modeled water quality data be evaluated for use in determining areas that need interim water solutions?

Under CV-SALTS, sampling plans must justify the sampling locations. To do that, Early Action Plans should consider the following:



The State Water Board's Domestic Well Water Quality Tool and associated Aquifer Risk maps (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/gama/online_tools.html);

The density of domestic well counts and estimated nitrate presence;

The boundaries of public water systems

(https://gis.data.ca.gov/datasets/fbba842bf134497c9d611ad506ec48cc_0)

Sampling locations should also include areas with both existing and estimated nitrate risk.

Outside public water system boundaries, water quality samples must be collected to ensure sufficient knowledge of the water quality of drinking water sources so that replacement water solutions are available to impacted domestic well owners and people served by state small water systems. An appropriate approach should include use of existing data and newly collected data, and water quality modeling sufficient to ensure that all areas of a basin with domestic water users are adequately accounted for.

What is the potential for cost sharing when sampling for water quality analytes in addition to nitrate?

There is potential for Early Action Plans to cost share with the State Water Board on sampling data. The State Board would like to work with management zones on joint sampling plans that include sampling for compounds in addition to nitrate. If such sampling plans are agreed to, the State Board can provide funding for the portion of the costs not associated with nitrate analysis. Early Action Plans that utilize State Water Board-funded technical assistance providers for sample collection that includes household well sampling may be eligible to share analysis and labor costs. The Division of Financial Assistance will work with management zones individually to explore the potential for cost sharing.

For more information about cost sharing opportunities, contact: Jeff Wetzel with the Division of Financial Assistance: Jeff.Wetzel@waterboards.ca.gov.

Interim Water Supplies

How Should the Adequacy of Interim Water Supplies Be Determined?

Selection of interim water supplies should be done with community input guided by appropriate community engagement and planning. It is possible that a combination of the solutions may be necessary to address the needs of a given community.

Interim Water Supply Plans may be reviewed by the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water staff to ensure that the interim water supply plan is protective of public health.

What is a management zone's responsibility for providing replacement drinking water?

It is the expectation of the State Water Board that if nitrate is present above the MCL, management zones will be responsible for the costs of interim water supplies.

The State Water Board welcomes exploring opportunities for cost sharing when co-contaminants are present and where treatment for nitrate would still leave other contaminants in the drinking water above the associated MCL. Coordination of cost sharing opportunities should be done with the Division of Financial Assistance.

For more information on cost-sharing opportunities contact: Jeff Wetzel with the Division of Financial Assistance: Jeff.Wetzel@waterboards.ca.gov

How should individual interim drinking water options be evaluated?

Extension of Service: Extension of service or consolidation with nearby public water systems should be evaluated as the first alternative for any individual well within 500 feet of a community water system.

Point of Entry (POE)/Point of Use (POU):

POE/POU will require initial testing to determine breakthrough rates of nitrate and plans for operation and maintenance of the devices (including testing and filter replacement).

POE/POU devices must have appropriate NSF certification or be approved by the Division of Drinking Water for the specific use. For more information visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/device/watertreatmentdevices.html

POE/POU should not be utilized on any well with nitrate concentrations in excess of 20 mg/L (as nitrogen).

Kiosks:

Kiosks must be located at a public water system that is permitted by the State Water Board and complies with all standards.

The kiosk must be a certified vending machine. For more information on vending machine regulations visit:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/Water.aspx>

Hauled, Bottled or Vended Water:

Hauled water, bottled water and vended water is regulated by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). All interim hauled water supplies must meet CDPH's requirements, including ensuring the use of certified water haulers.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/Water.aspx>

Well Drilling: Drilling a new well may not always be the best solution to eliminate nitrate contamination because new or extended wells may pull from sources that have different constituents in the water.

It is advised that prior to drilling a well, samples are taken from the aquifer location and depth first to ensure the water will not have additional contaminants.

Wells drilled deeper to eliminate nitrate contamination must sample for contaminants associated deeper aquifers, such as arsenic, uranium, and any others known to be present in the basin.

New or extended wells in areas with existing groundwater contaminant levels in excess of their associated MCL are not considered adequate alternatives.