



## WATER QUALITY FACT SHEET

### BACKGROUND

MMWD manages a complex water system that provides high quality drinking water to 190,800 customers in central and southern Marin.

Nearly 75% of MMWD's water comes from 21,600 acres of protected watershed on Mt. Tamalpais, and in the grassy hills of west Marin. These areas are mostly forested MMWD-owned lands and other undeveloped rural lands. Rainfall from our watershed lands flow into MMWD's seven reservoirs. Water from these reservoirs is treated and filtered.

MMWD takes many steps to ensure the water delivered to your tap is of high quality. This includes responsibly managing our watershed lands and reservoirs, treating the water, operating and monitoring a complex distribution system, and maintaining and upgrading our facilities.

### TESTING

Every year, MMWD conducts more than 120,000 water quality and process control tests to ensure your water is safe to drink. MMWD looks for minerals, metals, salts and other similar chemicals. MMWD also tests for bacteria, herbicides, pesticides, endocrine disruptors, and industrial chemicals. In addition to the tests listed above, MMWD also tests your water to ensure the color and clarity are up to our high standards.

### TASTE & ODOR

Occasionally, some MMWD customers experience a different taste or odor in their drinking water. Some describe the water as tasting and smelling earthy, musty, or moldy. This is caused by naturally occurring algae blooms in our reservoirs. Algae blooms are a natural phenomenon in our reservoirs, particularly during the warm summer months, and are a reminder that our lakes are living water bodies.

The two most common taste and odor causing compounds algae produce in MMWD reservoirs are geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol (MIB). While algae is removed in the water treatment process, the taste and odor they impart can remain. Even though these compounds are harmless, the human senses of taste and smell are extremely sensitive to them and can detect them in the water at concentrations as low as 5 parts per trillion. An off the shelf carbon filter such as those made by Brita or Pur can improve the taste.

Throughout the year, MMWD may shift water sources from one reservoir to another to accommodate maintenance projects, or to manage water supplies. These operational changes can result in customers noticing changes to the taste and smell of their tap water.

Be assured that in spite of occasional variations in taste or odor, your water meets the highest standards for drinking water.

If you have any questions, you may call our Water Quality Laboratory at 415-945-1550, or email [waterquality@marinwater.org](mailto:waterquality@marinwater.org).