



## Questions Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Wastewater Treatment

### COVID-19

#### Is COVID-19 in wastewater and is it treated?

Yes, scientists and researchers have been able to identify evidence of COVID-19 in raw sewage; however, there is no indication that it is infectious in that form. The good news is that current on-going studies across the country have shown **NO** detection of the material after going through typical wastewater treatment and disinfection processes.

The top agencies and experts on the subject matter all agree that the spread of COVID-19 through wastewater is not a public health threat. For example:

“Wastewater treatment plants treat viruses and other pathogens. Coronavirus, which causes COVID-19, is a type of virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection. Standard treatment and disinfectant processes at wastewater treatment plants are expected to be effective.” **US Environmental Protection Agency**

“There is no evidence that COVID-19 survives the disinfection process for drinking water or wastewater”  
**California Water Board**

In the US, we already know that wastewater is full of infectious organisms like viruses and have mandated treatment processes and safety practices to deal with them, including ways to protect workers from exposure.

#### Is the recycled water the District produces safe for irrigation?

Absolutely! Current treatment and disinfection processes, such as the ones used in Fountain Hills, are designed to address much harder viruses and those that are more prevalent in the environment than the current coronavirus-19.

The Sanitary District exceeds all state and federal minimum standards for turning wastewater into recycled water for irrigation. After the conventional treatment process, the District filters its recycled water through a sophisticated membrane filtration system to ensure no viruses or pathogens can pass. The water is then disinfected and safely distributed to golf courses and Town parks for irrigation. The District conducts as many as 450 samples and tests in a month to ensure the treatment process is functioning properly and the quality of the final product, recycled water, meets or exceeds all state requirements for Class A+ Recycled Water.

#### What is the Sanitary District doing to help customers at this time?

- Understanding the financial hardships many individuals and businesses are facing, the Board of Directors suspended late fees and interest penalties through the end of 2020.
- The Board of Directors has postponed a proposed \$1/month sewer user fee increase. The sewer user fee increase is needed to keep pace with the rising costs of providing the critical service of wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling. Local economic conditions will be monitored closely, and the fee increase will be delayed until a later date.

#### What is the Sanitary District doing to protect its employees?

- Implemented social distancing within our workforce.
- Modified work schedules to separate staff, which limits physical interactions.
- Reinforced standard employee protective practices for working in and around wastewater.
- Increased use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and proper hygiene practices.