Did You Know?
The City’s Water Laboratory

Your water is safe—the team at the City’s Water Resources Laboratory is making sure.

This is no small task. Behind this simple idea are 365 days of Lab operation per year, with 17,000 samples collected and 50,000 water and wastewater tests conducted last year. The Lab tests for dozens of metals, inorganics, and bacteriological contaminants, each with its own regulated sampling size, holding time, and analytical procedure.

It’s also no insignificant mission. The Lab tests all the City’s drinking water for quality, and tests wastewater to ensure potential pollutants are removed before discharge into the Pacific Ocean. The Lab must be certified to test these highly regulated samples and submit data to regulatory agencies like the State Water Resources Control Board and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Lab is helped by advanced instrumentation and reporting software, but it still requires considerable legwork by staff, who are responsible for testing the water and for collecting samples at the City’s various water sources and treatment plants. In addition, staff collect samples from 42 distribution stations scattered throughout the City.

Doing so, the Lab ensures the safety of our drinking water as it enters the distribution system and is conveyed, via miles and miles of pipes, to our homes, then to El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant after use, and finally to the ocean.

The City’s water customers are one of the most important links for ensuring contamination-free water. We encourage you to ask questions about the water you drink. The Lab is committed to helping resolve any water quality concerns its customers may have.

If you have any questions about your drinking water, please send us an email at PWInfo@SantaBarbaraCA.gov or call the Lab at 805-568-1008.