

# Recycled Water The Facts



## THE BASICS

- ◆ Potable reuse is highly treated recycled water that can be used for drinking, cooking and bathing. The purification techniques use proven technology that make the water safe.
- ◆ The amount of fresh water on the planet does not change. Through nature, all water has been used and reused since the beginning of time. This natural process is known as the water cycle. Using advanced technology to recycle water merely accelerates a natural process.

## THE TREATMENT

- ◆ Treatment for recycled water used for potable reuse is proven safe for public health and the environment. The advanced processes used to treat recycled water provide a safe, reliable and sustainable drinking water supply.
- ◆ First, recycled water goes through multiple advanced pretreatment processes.
- ◆ Next, the water receives additional filtration processes to remove microorganisms, including viruses, bacteria and other pollutants.

- ◆ Although the water is exceptionally clean at this point, the last step provides additional layers of protection through advanced disinfection treatments such as ultraviolet light, ozone and peroxide. These disinfection processes ensure high-quality drinking water.

## THE NEED

- ◆ Floridians use nearly 6.4 billion gallons of water per day. With an estimated 1,000 people moving to the state daily, residents are projected to use an additional 1 billion gallons per day by 2040. Our supply is not endless, expanding the use of recycled water is one way we can help ensure there is plenty of water to meet the demand. This is part of our state's plan to be more sustainable, diversify its water sources and protect the environment. The need to plan for and diversify alternative water sources is vital to meet projected water needs as well as respond to drought, protect the environment and ensure a robust economic future.
- ◆ Reusing water relieves pressure on Florida's water resources and ecosystems. The more water we recycle, the more water remains in our rivers and springs for the plants and wildlife that rely upon them such as fish, birds and manatees.

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## THE REGULATION

- Recycled water, when used for potable reuse, meets or is a higher quality than strict state and federal drinking water standards.
- Highly trained and certified water treatment plant operators are responsible for maintaining safe, functioning water systems in Florida. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) takes its responsibility seriously to ensure that water utilities provide safe, reliable drinking water to Floridians, including those using recycled water.

## THE FUTURE

- Florida is the national leader in water reuse, using 48 percent of total domestic wastewater. However, more than 830 million gallons of treated water per day are disposed into Florida's surface water bodies or deep disposal wells. Through advanced treatment and continued conservation efforts, this unused source could supply Florida with most of its projected water needs.
- Various utilities in Florida already are planning for recycled water used as potable reuse as a future water source because of our dwindling water supply in lakes, springs and aquifers.

Although potable reuse is used reliably and safely in the United States and around the world, Florida needs to update its regulations for this recycled water to be used in the Sunshine State. The good news is that the DEP already is doing that to help get this recycled water in Florida communities.

The Florida Legislature passed the Clean Waterways Act in 2020 to give DEP the authority it needs to create and update regulations necessary for recycled water. DEP is initiating the public process to update its regulations based on the Florida Potable Reuse Commission's recommendations. Regulations will address the technical components of water treatment, including things like contaminants of emerging concern, and federal and state drinking water-quality standards. DEP's regulations will ensure all recycled water is safe.



# One Water Florida