

# Residential Water Treatment – Preexisting Device Questionnaire

The high-quality drinking water supplied to your home from Irvine Ranch Water District does not require home water treatment systems. Removing these devices and using IRWD drinking water is efficient and cost-effective. If you have questions about an existing home water treatment system, the steps outlined here can assist you in identifying possible solutions.

## Getting Started

If you have a reason to install a home water treatment device, visit IRWD's Water Quality website to understand why we encourage the use of salt-free water treatment systems: [IRWD.com/water-report](http://IRWD.com/water-report). If you decide a water treatment system is necessary, we encourage you to consider the following steps:

**IMPORTANT NOTE:  
SELF-REGENERATING WATER  
SOFTENING SYSTEMS ARE  
PROHIBITED**

### 1. Identify any water issues you believe exist, such as color, odor, or taste.

- Have you reached out to Irvine Ranch Water District with your water quality concern?
- Have you reviewed the Irvine Ranch Water District Water Quality Report?

### 2. Identify the manufacturer/maintenance service and contact them for assistance. Water quality issues can result from a lapse in device maintenance.

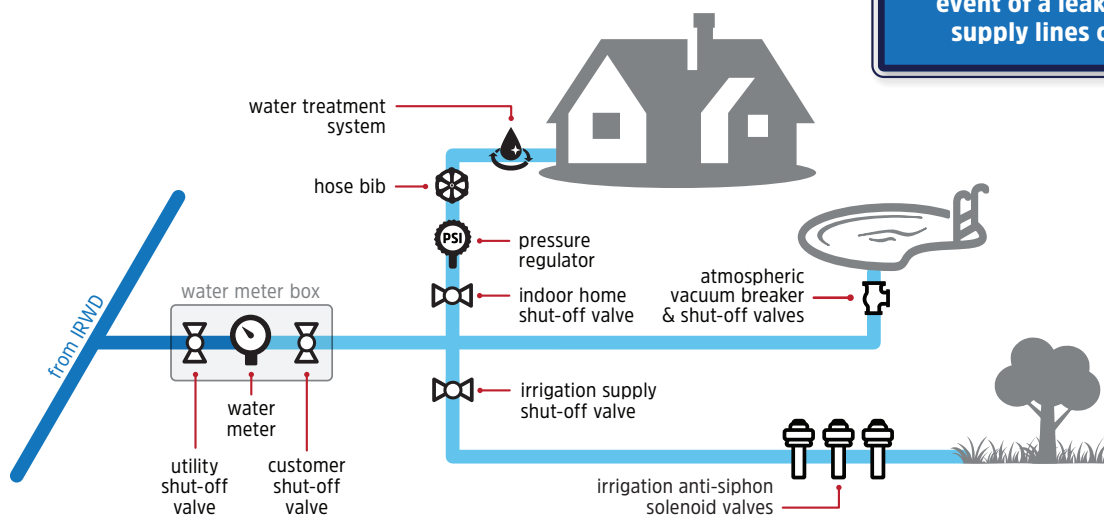
## Evaluate Your Home

To ensure your system is as water-efficient and cost-effective as possible, we encourage you to have a good understanding of how the treated water will move through your home.

### 1. Draw a rough blueprint of your home's plumbing system.

- If you're unsure where to start, try using your WaterInsight portal at [IRWD.waterinsight.com](http://IRWD.waterinsight.com). Under the 'I want to...' section scroll down to 'Learn to read my meter'. These informational videos will help you familiarize yourself with your property.
- Most importantly, you should determine if there are any potential plumbing lines that do not need to have the highly treated water. Unnecessary areas may include: hose bibs, pools, fountains, water features, irrigation supply lines to valves, toilets, faucets, etc. In general, the water supply line to the outside of the home should have a separate plumbing line not supplied by the residential water treatment system.
- Are there multiple shut-off valves easily accessible for emergency shut-off or plumbing repairs?

**WATER EFFICIENCY TIP:  
Shut-off valves should be installed  
wherever possible so that in the  
event of a leak or repair, water  
supply lines can be isolated.**



## System Maintenance

### Water Softeners and Conditioners

1. Water conditioner backwash cycles are programmed to clean the membrane inside the tank. Backwashing can be as frequent as once every week, as seldom as once a month or based on indoor demand. If a system is conditioning more often, it will generate more water waste. Ask your installer to program the most efficient backwash programming.
2. Without proper maintenance, iron-oxide, also known as rust, can build up on the water softener resin surface causing orange spots in your water, which can transfer to fixtures or clothing. Unmanaged treatment systems can decrease water efficiency and increase unpleasant color, odor, and taste. Always check the tank indicator light for necessary maintenance.
3. If household water use increases or decreases, your system may need to be reviewed for more efficient tank sizing. If you are using a treatment device installed by a previous homeowner, determine if the existing device is the correct size for your household. Talk to the manufacturer/maintenance service about the tank size.

**WATER EFFICIENCY TIP:**  
California law requires that residential water treatment systems have high efficiency restrictors on all indoor devices downstream of (or supplied by) the treatment device, i.e. high-efficiency toilets, faucet aerators, and shower heads).

### Reverse Osmosis (RO) Devices

1. Reverse osmosis filtration should only be heard when the system is in use or up to an hour after use. If you hear the RO device running after the storage tank is full, the system may be leaking.
2. When water passes through an RO membrane, the mineral content and pH decrease, resulting in an acidic pH (<7) range, lower than neutral level (7). This lower pH range can react with different materials causing corrosion or rust.
3. Filter lights should indicate when RO membrane replacement is needed. Check the pretreatment, sediment, and activated carbon filters. Replace them as indicated by the manufacturer. If the last replacement date is unknown replace as soon as possible.

## System Maintenance

Residential home water treatment systems require ongoing maintenance. As the homeowner, you must be knowledgeable about your treatment system. Identify the manufacturer/maintenance service and contact them for assistance as needed.

**WATER EFFICIENCY TIP:**  
A conditioner with a demand-control controller head backwashes or cleans the tank membrane based on the amount of water that has gone through the treatment device. A clock control or calendar model inefficiently backwashes based on a preset schedule. To save water, exchange your clock or calendar model for a more efficient demand-control model.