



Q&A Sheet: Understanding Whole-Home and Point-of-Use RO Systems in the Context of Citywide Water Treatment

Q1: What is Reverse Osmosis (RO)?

A: Reverse Osmosis is a treatment process that uses a membrane to produce very high-quality water by reducing minerals, salts and certain trace contaminants.

Q2: What is a whole-home RO system?

A: A whole-home RO system treats all the water entering a home, providing uniformly treated water to every faucet, shower and appliance. These systems are typically used in settings where residents want highly purified water throughout their house or where private well water has unique characteristics.

Q3: What is a point-of-use (POU) under-the-sink RO system?

A: A point-of-use RO system is installed at a single location, usually the kitchen sink, to provide purified water specifically for drinking and cooking. They are compact and offer a focused solution for households seeking very high-quality water at one tap.

Q4: Do RO systems reduce Chromium-6?

A: Yes. Both whole-home and point-of-use RO systems are effective at reducing Chromium-6 at the locations where they are installed.

RO Devices in the Context of Citywide Drinking Water Standards

Q5: Why are POU RO devices not used as the city's primary approach for Chromium-6 compliance?

A: State drinking water regulations apply to the water delivered through the city's entire distribution system. Point-of-use devices are designed for individual taps, so they serve a different purpose than well head or centralized treatment and are not part of regulatory compliance pathways.

Q6: Where are POU RO systems most effective?

A: They are excellent for households that want enhanced water quality for drinking and cooking at a specific faucet. They offer a focused and convenient way for residents to tailor their water quality to their preferences.

Q7: What role does centralized or well head RO treatment play?

A: Centralized or well head treatment ensures that all water delivered throughout the community meets state standards at every connection point. This provides consistent water quality for homes, businesses, schools and other facilities.

Q8: Can households still use RO units if the city installs well head or centralized Chromium-6 treatment?

A: Absolutely. Residents who prefer the taste or characteristics of RO-treated drinking water can still use their personal POU systems at home, even when the city provides system-wide compliance treatment.

Q9: How do RO units fit into the bigger picture of long-term water planning?

A: RO units are a great option for individual preference at the tap. Meanwhile, long-term citywide planning focuses on ensuring that the entire system complies with state standards, supports future growth, maintains reliability, and provides consistent water quality to every customer.

Q10: What is the city evaluating for Chromium-6?

A: The city is currently reviewing centralized treatment options, such as ion exchange or RO at well sites, as well as supply strategies like blending or the incorporation of new sources. These approaches are designed to meet state requirements at the system level while ensuring high-quality water for all residents.