

WHAT IS SALINITY?

Salinity (salt) in water is a measure of dissolved mineral salts such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, sulfate, and chloride. All water supplies naturally contain some salt, but agricultural, industrial, and residential water users often add more salt to the water they use. At home, for example, the use of water

softeners, detergents, cleaning products, liquid fabric softeners, soaps, and shampoos all add salt to your wastewater.

All of this salt-laden water flows through the sewer system to the wastewater treatment

plant. Because salt is already dissolved when it arrives at the treatment plant, it cannot be effectively removed by the current wastewater treatment process. As a result, much of the salt simply passes through the treatment plant and ends up in the San Juan River as part of the treated discharge.



Once salt is in the water, it is difficult to remove and expensive to treat.

High levels of salt in wastewater may result in regulatory-mandated treatment improvements that would result in increased sewer rates.

WHY IS SALINITY A PROBLEM IN THE CITY OF FARMINGTON?

Too much salt in our wastewater can affect sensitive ecosystems and degrade the quality of our water supply for drinking, farming, industry, and recreation.

Unfortunately, high levels of salt in wastewater may result in regulatory-mandated treatment improvements. Installing costly systems at the treatment plant to remove excess salt would result in significantly increased rates for residential and commercial users.

Therefore, it is important for all of us to take simple measures to decrease the salinity in our wastewater. These measures will help us:

- ◆ Provide safe, clean, and affordable drinking water
- ◆ Protect the environment and aquatic life
- ◆ Avoid costly regulatory fines or upgrades to the treatment plant, which would result in higher sewer rates
- ◆ Extend the life of water pipes, appliances, and equipment
- ◆ Preserve water quality for potential re-use (high salinity levels limits water resource management options and the ability to use reclaimed water in the future)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

A few simple changes in your household can help significantly reduce the salinity in the San Juan River:

Household Cleaners

- ◆ Use **environmentally friendly cleaning products** with no phosphates, chlorine, sodium, artificial fragrances, or artificial colors
- ◆ Use **dryer sheets** instead of liquid fabric softener
- ◆ Use **liquid dishwasher and laundry detergents** instead of powders
- ◆ Minimize use of cleaning products



Water Softeners

The overuse of water softeners is often a major cause of salinity in wastewater. Many water softeners cycle more frequently than necessary, with each recharge cycle flushing pounds of used salt into the sewer. If you use a water softener:

- ◆ **Reduce your water use**—the less water you treat, the less salt you put down the drain
- ◆ **Check your settings** to make sure they are optimal for our hardness levels (Farmington's municipal water supply has a hardness level of 200 - 400 ppm)
- ◆ **Change from a timer-based to a demand-based softener** (one that recharges only when needed, based on how much water is used)
- ◆ **If your softener is timer-based, make sure it recharges at the lowest effective rate**, and turn it off when you go on vacation
- ◆ **Install a bypass** so you are not softening water used for landscape irrigation
- ◆ **Consider whether a water softener is even needed** in your household; you might be able to go without your softener and avoid the ongoing expenses for its operations and maintenance
- ◆ **Consider other alternatives** to salt-based water softeners

Use dryer sheets

Don't Pass the Salt!



We need your help
to reduce salt levels
in Farmington's
wastewater



WATER SOFTENER \$AVINGS!

You can save money on softener salt, electricity, and water by not operating your water softener as frequently.



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