

Water Words

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Habitat indicator:

A physical attribute of the environment measured to characterize conditions necessary to support an organism, population, or community in the absence of pollutants. For example, salinity of estuarine waters or substrate type in streams or lakes.

Hazardous waste:

Any waste is identified as such under the regulations set by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. .

Health advisory level:

A non-regulatory health-based reference level of chemical traces (usually in ppm) in drinking water at which there are no adverse health risks when ingested over various periods of time. Such levels are established by U.S. EPA under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). DHS administers the SDWA in California.

Health Services, Department of (DHS):

A state agency that administers a broad range of public and clinical health programs, including those required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Among its many programs, DHS regulates the distribution of drinking water and certifies laboratories for the purpose of water quality sampling.

Heavy metals:

High-density, metallic elements that can be toxic, e.g., lead, silver, mercury and arsenic.

Herbicide:

A chemical used to kill nuisance plants. Herbicides can contain pollutants found in runoff.

Holding pond:

A pond or reservoir, usually made of earth, built to store wastewater, or polluted runoff for discharge at a later time.

Holding time:

The maximum amount of time a sample may be stored before analysis.

Homeowner water system:

Any water system that supplies piped water to a single residence.

Hydraulic conductivity:

The rate at which water can move through a permeable medium.

Hydraulic gradient:

The direction of groundwater flow due to changes in the depth of the water table.

Hydrocarbons:

Chemical compounds that consist entirely of carbon and hydrogen; also referred to as volatile organic compound.

Hydrogeological cycle:

The natural process recycling water from the atmosphere down to (and through) the earth and back to the atmosphere again.

Hydrogeology:

The geology of groundwater, with particular emphasis on the chemistry and movement of water.

Hydrograph:

A graphical representation of stream flows versus time.

Hydrologic balance:

An accounting of all water inflow to, water outflow from, and changes in water storage within a hydrologic unit over a specified period of time.

Hydrologic basin:

The drainage area upstream from a given point on a stream.

Hydrologic cycle:

Movement or exchange of water between the atmosphere and earth.

Hydrology:

The science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water.

Hydrolysis:

The decomposition of organic compounds by interaction with water.

Hydropneumatic:

A water system, usually small, whose water pump is automatically controlled by the pressure in a compressed air tank.