

# Recycled Water Talking Points



- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Recycled water, when used for potable reuse, meets or is a higher quality than the strict state and federal drinking water standards.
- Potable reuse uses recycled water to indirectly or directly expand drinking water supplies.
  - Indirect potable reuse involves the planned discharge of reclaimed water to ground or surface waters to develop or supplement potable water supplies.
  - Direct potable reuse involves introducing advanced treated reclaimed water — highly treated to meet drinking water standards — into a water supply immediately upstream of a drinking water treatment facility or directly into a potable water distribution system.
- Treatment for this type of recycled water 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.

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- Recycled water treatment processes used for potable reuse are proven safe for public health and the environment. 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.
- Recycled water is an alternative water source that has been safely implemented around the world and within the United States. Examples include Australia, Singapore, California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado and Georgia. It has the potential to provide Florida with a new drinking water source.
- 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 for potable reuse as a future water source because of our dwindling water supply in lakes, springs and aquifers.
- 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.

