

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How much is an acre foot of water?

An acre foot is 325,851 gallons of water. One acre foot will cover approximately one football field with one foot of water.

2. How do I know if I am eligible for “blue valve” water?

Parcels of land that have a blind flange are eligible to receive “blue valve” water. Landowners can review their property tax bill. Standby and Availability Charges appear when there is a blind flange or a “blue valve” on the land. For more information contact the San Benito County Water District.

3. Do I have to file land registration forms prior to receiving “blue valve” water?

There are different Reclamation Reform Act reporting thresholds. The following chart identifies the acreage threshold for various types of recipients. If the threshold is reached, it creates the requirement to file land forms before receiving “blue valve” water.

Type of Recipient	Number of Acres
Qualified	240 or more
Limited Recipient	40 or more
Prior Law	40 or more
Public Entities	40 or more
Trusts	Land held in trust is ultimately attributed to 25 or fewer natural persons = 240 acres. Land held in trust is ultimately attributed to more than 25 natural persons = 40 acres.

Please visit the Bureau of Reclamation’s website at www.usbr.gov/rra for detailed information on Reclamation Reform Act requirements or contact the San Benito County Water District.

4. What is a “blue valve” contract account?

Contract customers purchase water on an annual basis. A contract customer must submit an Initial Request for water in January of each year. Using this information and considering the District’s water supply from the United States Bureau of Reclamation, the contract customer receives an allocation of water. The District prepares and mails a contract in February, which must be completed by a specific deadline. A 15% prepayment is required to execute the contract. Water transfers are permitted between contract customers and are subject to annual transfer policy.

5. What is a small parcel service?

Parcels that are ten acres or less are eligible for Small Parcel Service. This type of account is billed a flat rate bi-monthly, along with power charges. The Agricultural account has an allowance of two acre feet. A Municipal & Industrial account has an allowance of one acre foot. Other water charges are billed if allowances are exceeded.

6. Should I depend on “blue valve” water to be available at all times?

THE “BLUE VALVE” WATER IS SUPPLEMENTAL AND INTERRUPTIBLE.

The District’s annual water supply from the United States Bureau of Reclamation varies from year to year. The District’s allocation procedure is designed for use in a range of water supply contract allocations *excluding* extreme shortage conditions. Under extreme shortage conditions, the Board of Directors will review the water supply conditions and determine if a water supply emergency exists. If a water supply emergency exists, the Board of Directors will allocate the available supply to address that emergency.

7. Is “blue valve” water for domestic use?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued rules for purposes of implementing the federal and state Safe Drinking Water Acts. These rules affect all residential and business users of San Felipe “blue valve” water. These rules preclude domestic use. *Water may not be used for domestic consumption, which includes drinking, cooking, bathing and oral hygiene.*

8. Am I required to schedule the use of water from my “blue valve” account?

Small parcel accounts are not normally required to schedule their water. During extreme shortage conditions, the necessity for small parcel accounts to schedule water will be reviewed. Contract accounts are required to schedule their water. Water orders can be placed Monday through Friday and must be placed at least 24 hours in advance. Water orders may be called, faxed or sent by e-mail to waterorders@sbcwd.com. Name, meter number, date, gallons per minute and beginning and end irrigation times must be provided. All water deliveries should be turned on, off or adjusted as close to the scheduled times as possible.

9. How often will I be billed?

Small parcel accounts are billed every other month. Contract accounts are billed monthly. Metered wells are billed bi-annually and un-metered wells are billed annually. All bills are due within 20 days of the billing date.

10. How do I get a permit to drill a well?

Contact the San Benito County Water District to get a well permit application and list of procedures.

11. I live in the city of Hollister. Who should I call for residential water service?

There are two water companies that provide residential water service depending on where you live. They are *Sunnyslope County Water District* (831) 637-4670 and the *City of Hollister* (831) 636-4377.