

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

Water Quality

Indian Standard for
Drinking Water - Specification
IS 10500 : 1991

Technical Terms

- BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards)
- Desirable limits
- Permissible limit
- PPM
- NTU
- Hazen Units

Colour, Hazen Units	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 5 Hz. , Permissible : 25 Hz.
Risks or effects	Visible tint, acceptance decreases
Sources	Tannins, Iron, Copper, Manganese Natural deposits
Treatment	Filtration, Distillation, Reverse osmosis, Ozonisation

Odour	
IS 10500-1991	Unobjectionable
Risks or effects	Rotten egg, Musty, Chemical
Sources	Chlorine, Hydrogen sulfide, Organic matter, Septic contamination, Methane gas
Treatment	Activated carbon, Air stripping, oxidation, Filtration

pH	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable :6.5 – 8.5, Permissible :No relaxation
Risks or effects	Low pH - corrosion, metallic taste High pH – bitter/soda taste, deposits
Sources	Natural
Treatment	Increase pH by soda ash Decrease pH with white vinegar / citric acid

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)

IS 10500-1991

Desirable : 500 mg/l , Permissible : 2000 mg/l

Risks or effects

Hardness, scaly deposits, sediment, cloudy colored water, staining, salty or bitter taste, corrosion of pipes and fittings

Sources

Livestock waste, septic system
Landfills, nature of soil
Hazardous waste landfills
Dissolved minerals, iron and manganese

Treatment

Reverse Osmosis, Distillation, deionization by ion exchange

Hardness	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable :300 mg/l , Permissible : 600 mg/l
Risks or effects	Scale in utensils and hot water system, soap scums
Sources	Dissolved calcium and magnesium from soil and aquifer minerals containing limestone or dolomite
Treatment	Water Softener Ion Exchanger , Reverse Osmosis

Alkalinity	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 200 mg/l , Permissible : 600 mg/lit
Risks or effects	Low Alkalinity (i.e. high acidity) causes deterioration of plumbing and increases the chance for many heavy metals in water are present in pipes, solder or plumbing fixtures.
Sources	Pipes, landfills Hazardous waste landfills
Treatment	Neutralizing agent

Iron, Fe	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.3 mg/l , Permissible : 1.0 mg/l
Risks or effects	Brackish color, rusty sediment, bitter or metallic taste, brown-green stains, iron bacteria, discolored beverages
Sources	Leaching of cast iron pipes in water distribution systems Natural
Treatment	Oxidizing Filter , Green-sand Mechanical Filter

Manganese, Mn

IS 10500-1991

Desirable : 0.1 mg/l , Permissible : 0.3 mg/l

Risks or effects

Brownish color, black stains on laundry and fixtures at .2 mg/l, bitter taste, altered taste of water-mixed beverages

Sources

Landfills
Deposits in rock and soil

Treatment

Ion Exchange , Chlorination, Oxidizing Filter , Green-sand
Mechanical Filter

Sulphate, SO₄

IS 10500-1991

Desirable : 200 mg/l, Permissible : 400 mg/l

Risks or effects

Bitter, medicinal taste, scaly deposits, corrosion, laxative effects, "rotten-egg" odor from hydrogen sulfide gas formation

Sources

Animal sewage, septic system, sewage
By-product of coal mining, industrial waste
Natural deposits or salt

Sulphate Treatment

Ion Exchange , Distillation , Reverse Osmosis

Nitrate, NO₃⁻	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 45 mg/l, Permissible : 100 mg/lit
Risks or effects	Methemoglobinemia or blue baby disease in infants
Sources	Livestock facilities, septic systems, manure lagoons, fertilizers Household waste water, fertilizers Fertilizers Natural Deposits
Treatment	Ion Exchange, Distillation, Reverse Osmosis

Chloride, Cl	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 250 mg/l , Permissible : 1000 mg/l
Risks or effects	High blood pressure, salty taste, corroded pipes, fixtures and appliances, blackening and pitting of stainless steel
Sources	Fertilizers Industrial wastes Minerals, seawater
Treatment	Reverse Osmosis , Distillation, Activated Carbon

Fluoride, F

IS 10500-1991

Desirable : 1.0 mg/l, Permissible : 1.5 mg/l

Risks or effects

Brownish discoloration of teeth, bone damage

Sources

Industrial waste
Geological

Treatment

Activated Alumina, Distillation, Reverse Osmosis, Ion Exchange

Arsenic, As	
IS:10500-1991	Desirable: 0.05 mg/l Permissible: No relaxation
Risks or effects	Weight loss; Depression; Lack of energy; Skin and nervous system toxicity
Sources	Previously used in pesticides (orchards) Improper waste disposal or product storage of glass or electronics, Mining Rocks
Treatment	Activated Alumina Filtration, Reverse Osmosis, Distillation, Chemical Precipitation, Ion exchange, lime softening

Chromium, Cr	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.05 mg/l, Permissible : No relaxation
Risks or effects	Skin irritation, skin and nasal ulcers, lung tumors, gastrointestinal effects, damage to the nervous system and circulatory system, accumulates in the spleen, bones, kidney and liver
Sources	Septic systems Industrial discharge, mining sites Geological
Treatment	Ion Exchange, Reverse Osmosis, Distillation

Copper, Cu	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.05 mg/l, Permissible : 1.5 mg/l
Risks or effects	Anemia, digestive disturbances, liver and kidney damage, gastrointestinal irritations, bitter or metallic taste; Blue-green stains on plumbing fixtures
Sources	Leaching from copper water pipes and tubing, algae treatment Industrial and mining waste, wood preservatives Natural deposits
Treatment	Ion Exchange, Reverse Osmosis, Distillation

Cyanide	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.05 mg/l, Permissible : No relaxation
Risks or effects	Thyroid, nervous system damage
Sources	Fertilizer Electronics, steel, plastics mining
Treatment	Ion Exchange, Reverse Osmosis, Chlorination

Lead, Pb	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.05 mg/l, Permissible : No relaxation
Risks or effects	Reduces mental capacity (mental retardation), interference with kidney and neurological functions, hearing loss, blood disorders, hypertension, death at high levels
Sources	Paint, diesel fuel combustion Pipes and solder, discarded batteries, paint, leaded gasoline Natural deposits
Treatment	Ion Exchange, Activated Carbon , Reverse Osmosis, Distillation

Mercury, Hg	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable : 0.001 mg/l, Permissible : No relaxation
Risks or effects	Loss of vision and hearing, intellectual deterioration, kidney and nervous system disorders, death at high levels
Sources	Fungicides Batteries, fungicides Mining, electrical equipment, plant, paper and vinyl chloride Natural deposits
Treatment	Reverse Osmosis, Distillation

Zinc, Zn	
IS 10500-1991	Desirable :5 mg/l, Permissible : 15 mg/l
Risks or effects	Metallic taste
Sources	Leaching of galvanized pipes and fittings, paints, dyes Natural deposits
Treatment	Ion Exchange Water Softeners, Reverse Osmosis, Distillation

Total Coliform Bacteria	
IS 10500-1991	95% of samples should not contain coliform in 100 ml 10 coliform / 100ml
Risks or effects	Gastrointestinal illness
Sources	Livestock facilities, septic systems, manure lagoons Household waste water Naturally occurring
Treatment	Chlorination , Ultraviolet, Distillation, Iodination

E.coliform Bacteria

IS 10500-1991	Nil / 100ml
Risks or effects	Gastrointestinal illness
Sources	Livestock facilities, septic systems, manure lagoons Household waste water Naturally occurring
Treatment	Chlorination , Ultraviolet, Distillation, Iodination

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHEMICAL PARAMETERS

Parameter	BIS Guideline value (maximum allowable)	General & Health effect
Total dissolved solids	2000 mg/L	Undesirable taste; gastro intestinal irritations; corrosion or incrustation
PH	6.5-8.5	Affects mucous membrane; bitter taste; corrosion; affects aquatic life
Alkalinity	600 mg/L	Boiled rice turns yellowish
Hardness	600 mg/L	Poor lathering with soap; deterioration of the quality of clothes; scale forming; skin irritation; boiled meat and food become poor in quality
Calcium	200	Poor lathering and deterioration of the quality of clothes; incrustation in pipes; scale formation
Magnesium	100	Poor lathering and deterioration of clothes; with sulfate laxative
Iron	1.0	Poor or sometimes bitter taste, color and turbidity; staining of clothes materials; iron bacteria causing slime
Manganese	0.3	Poor taste, color and turbidity; staining; black slime

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHEMICAL PARAMETERS

Parameter	BIS Guideline value (maximum allowable)	General & Health effect
Aluminum	0.2	Neurological disorders; Alzheimer's disease
Copper	1.5	Liver damage; mucosal irritation, renal damage and depression; restricts growth of aquatic plants
Zinc	15	Astringent taste; opalescence in water; gastro intestinal irritation; vomiting, dehydration, abdominal pain, nausea and dizziness
Ammonia	-	Indicates pollution; growth of algae
Nitrite	-	Forms nitrosoamines which are carcinogenic
Nitrate	100	Blue baby disease (methemoglobineamia); algal growth
Sulfate	400	Taste affected; laxative effect; gastro intestinal irritation
Chloride	1000	Taste affected; corrosive
Fluoride	1.5	Dental and skeletal fluorosis; non-skeletal

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHEMICAL PARAMETERS

Parameter	BIS Guideline value (maximum allowable)	General & Health effect
Phosphate	-	Algal growth
Arsenic	0.05	Toxic; bio-accumulation; central nervous system affected; carcinogenic
Mercury	0.001	Highly toxic; causes 'minamata' disease-neurological impairment and renal disturbances; mutagenic
Cadmium	0.01	Highly toxic; causes 'itai-itai' disease-painful rheumatic condition; cardio vascular system affected; gastro intestinal upsets and hyper tension
Lead	0.05	Causes plumbism-tiredness, lassitudes, abdominal discomfort, irritability, anaemia; bio-accumulation; impaired neurological and motor development, and damage to kidneys
Chromium	0.05	Carcinogenic; ulcerations, respiratory problems and skin complaints
Pesticide	0.001	Affects central nervous system
Detergent	-	Undesirable foaming