

## City-water chemical Quality Tests (CQT)

### Scope:



#### **Organoleptic & Physical Parameters:**

Colour (Appearance & True Colour Units), Odour, pH, Turbidity; Electrical Conductivity (EC) & Total Dissolved Solids by gravimetry (TDSG).



#### **Chemical Parameters:**

P-Alkalinity, Total Alkalinity, Total hardness of water (THW), Calcium (Ca) & Magnesium (Mg); Ammoniacal-Nitrogen, Nitrites (NO<sub>2</sub>), Nitrates (NO<sub>3</sub>); Chloride, Fluoride, Sulfate.

Total parameters: 7 + 11 = 19

### Rationale:

Many consumers access water from multiple sources, to maximise total availability and minimise costs. Available water sources are often differentiated by designated use. For example; borewell water may be used exclusively for general purposes such as washing, gardening, etc. Farms, institutions and industries often have designated borewells for specific purposes for which physical and chemical profile is relevant. Sometimes consumers have access to a water source, and want to know its physical-chemical characteristics to plan appropriate use and/or to design water treatment systems. For example; mineral content is an important consideration in designing water treatment units. Water softener units may have to be incorporated to deal with excessive hardness of feedwater. Reverse osmosis (RO) units are required to treat saline water. The chemical Quality Tests are designed to address various water quality questions and concerns other than potability.

CQT is CPT minus the bacteriological parameters<sup>1</sup>. In CQT we have packaged a broad set of physical and chemical parameters, to check for buffering capacity (alkalinity) hardness, nitrogenous substances, chloride and sulfate, in addition to physical and sensory characteristics. Fluoride is included as fluorosis is endemic in some areas around Hyderabad. TDS value would be a point estimate based on actual weightment (gravimetry).

In the past, home owners have ordered CQT to know chemical quality of municipal supply, or to check if a softener unit is needed for borewell water. Water treatment consultants and Gram Panchayats have ordered CQT, mostly of borewell water, to plan for a RO plant. Industrial clients have brought borewell water, municipal supply, or RO-output to check if the chemical profile meets specific requirement of designated industrial process. Some clients have ordered CQT to know if the chemical profile of municipal supply or their borewell water is suitable for centralized cooling system.

Occasionally, clients intend to use a water for drinking and order for CQT, despite our advice that bacteriological coliform tests are essential for determination of potability. If physical and chemical characteristics of a sample do not satisfy the guideline values for drinking water, or indicate probable contamination, then it would be possible to say that the water is not potable. However, even if the physical and chemical characteristics are within acceptable/permissible limits for human consumption, we cannot say that the water is potable, without bacteriological testing to rule out faecal contamination.

### Sample - Collection, Storage & Transportation:

Indian Standard (IS) 17614 (Part 1) of 2021 provides guidance on the design of sampling programs and sampling techniques. IS 17614 (Part 5) of 2021 provides guidance on sampling of drinking water from treatment works and piped distribution systems. One litre sample collected in a clean and dry clear or amber colour polypropylene bottle (CBWS/ABWS) is required for physical and

### City-water chemical Quality Tests (CQT)



chemical tests. Collect sample from the pump delivery pipe or a tap connected to the source. For open wells without any pump, use a clean bucket or pot to draw water. In case of step wells, ponds etc. plunge the bottle into the water elbow-deep, then turn it right side up to collect the sample from below the water surface. Transport the sample to laboratory as soon as possible, preferably within six hours. If immediate transport is not feasible, store the sample in a cool box and transport to laboratory, within 24 hours.

### *Information About Source, Context, Intended Use & Concerns:*

Provide as much detail as you can about the source of water, sampling point, activities & environment around the sampling point, details of how the sampling point is linked to the source, recent maintenance event (servicing of water purifier, cleaning of overhead tank, sump, repair and renovation of plumbing, etc.) if any. Mention about intended use of the water, the reason why you are ordering the test, as well as doubts and concerns, if any. Occasionally, the IHS Laboratory may contact you for clarifications and additional information about the source and its environment, to help interpretation of test results.

### *Test Method & Duration:*

Test methods specified in appropriate parts of the IS 3025 and/or American Public Health Association (APHA) Standard Methods are followed. Report will be available in 2 to 3 days.

To pick up sample collection bottle and/or schedule collection of samples:

Email: [ihslab@ihs.org.in](mailto:ihslab@ihs.org.in); WhatsApp: +919848011251; Call: 23211013/4



For various water quality test packages: <https://www.ihs.org.in/lab/wqt.html>

& To download complete water quality test catalogue in tabular form, click:

<https://www.ihs.org.in/lab/wqt/pdf/IHSLabWaterQualityTestsCatalogue.pdf>

----- © 2022-2025, The Institute of Health Systems, Hyderabad, India. -----

<sup>i</sup> Earlier, the same test package was coded as TQT for 'Tap-water Quality Tests', because the expression 'tap water' is often used to mean municipal tap water. The code has been changed to CQT to avoid any confusion and for ready connect with the city-water potability tests (CPT).