



## **Benzene Detection at Creek Drive in Riverside Grove**

**September 9, 2020**

On 9/8/2020, the San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) learned that benzene was detected in a water sample taken at Creek Drive in the Riverside Grove neighborhood. The sample was taken on 9/4/2020. The part of the Riverside Grove neighborhood where the sample was taken is still under the Do Not Drink-Do Not Boil advisory (Advisory) issued on 8/29/2020.

### **Why Is There Contamination?**

The Riverside Grove neighborhood was heavily impacted by the CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Evidence from recent wildfires suggests that benzene contamination is likely to occur where structures are damaged by fire. When structures burn and the water system experiences low pressure, plastic particles, gases, and other fire-related contamination can be drawn into water connections and may get past the meter into the public water system.

### **How Much Benzene Was Detected?**

The lab report shows a detection of 2.7 ug/L (parts per billion). The state health based Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for benzene in drinking water is 1 ug/L.

### **What Steps Has the SLVWD Taken?**

The SLVWD immediately notified its regulatory agency, the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW) of the lab result. Then the SLVWD hand delivered a revised version of the Advisory to homes located in the pressure zone where the benzene detection occurred. The revised Advisory includes additional restrictions recommended by DDW, including:

- Limit use of hot water
- Limit shower time (use lukewarm water and ventilate area)
- Use a dishwasher to wash dishes and use air dry setting
- Wash clothing in cold water
- Do not take baths
- Do not use hot tubs or swimming pools

Additional water samples were collected at Creek Drive in the Riverside Grove neighborhood on 9/3, 9/5, 9/6 and 9/7. The lab analysis for these samples has been expedited. The SLVWD will release the final lab results as soon as they become available.

Prepared by the SLVWD on 9/09/2020

Approved by DDW on 9/9/2020

### **Next Steps**

Working closely with DDW, the SLVWD will develop and conduct an aggressive flushing and sampling plan over the next few weeks in the affected area of the Riverside Grove neighborhood. All services in the Riverside Grove pressure zone will be inspected for fire damage and service lines will be removed from the water main that are connected to structures that have fire damage.

### **What Separates This Area From Other Parts of the Water System?**

There is a check valve (or a one-way valve) separating the affected area of the Riverside Grove neighborhood from other parts of the water system. As a precaution, the SLVWD working closely with DDW will collect additional samples in the surrounding neighborhoods for testing to ensure that the contamination remains isolated.