

# COLOUR OF DRINKING WATER



## What colour is water?

Ordinarily we think of water as being blue in colour. When artists paint bodies of water they generally colour them blue or blue-green. While water does reflect blue-green light, noticeable in great depths, it should appear colourless as used in the home.

Ideally, water from the tap is not blue or blue-green. If such is the case, there are certain foreign substances in the water. Infinitely small microscopic particles add colour to water. Colloidal suspensions and non-colloidal organic acids as well as neutral salts also affect the colour of water. The color in water is primarily of vegetable origin and is extracted from leaves and aquatic plants. Naturally water draining from swamps has the most intense colouring. The bleaching action of sunlight plus the aging of water gradually dissipates this color, however. All surface waters possess some degree of color. Likewise, some shallow wells, springs and an occasional deep well can contain noticeable colouring. In general, however, water from deep wells is practically colourless.



When water is rated as having a colour of 5 units, it means: the colour of this water is equal in intensity to the color of distilled water containing 5 milligrams of platinum as potassium chloroplatinate per liter. Highly coloured water is objectionable for most process work in the industrial field because excessive colour causes stains. While colour is not a factor of great concern in relation to household applications, colour in drinking water lacks appeal from an aesthetic standpoint. Further, when excessively coloured water is used for clothes washing it can cause staining. The SANS 241 drinking Water Standard recommends that drinking water has a colour of less than 20mg/l. In general, colour is reduced or removed from water through the use of coagulation, settling and filtration techniques.

Rand Water purifies the water through a conventional purification process, resulting in water that is sparkling clear, safe to drink, and meets the SANS 241 water quality specifications.

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