

If you live in San Dimas and your water filter starts leaking, slows to a trickle, or your “filtered” water still tastes like the pool, the first question usually is not technical at all. It is, “Who do I even call for this, a plumber or some kind of water filtration company?”

I hear that confusion constantly from homeowners. The line between plumbing work and water treatment work is blurry, and the answer can mean the difference between a quick, affordable fix and a frustrating set of repeat visits.

This guide walks through how residential water filtration systems actually work, the most common problems, what repairs cost, and how to decide whether you need a plumber, a water treatment specialist, or a bit of DIY.

A quick look at San Dimas water

Before we talk about repair, it helps to understand what your system is trying to fix.

San Dimas is largely served by Golden State Water Company, with some pockets supplied by local mutual water companies and nearby districts. Most of the water comes from a blend of imported surface water and local groundwater. It is disinfected with chlorine and must meet state and federal drinking water standards.

So, is San Dimas water safe to drink from a regulatory standpoint? Yes, under normal conditions it complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act and is tested regularly. That is why most city and company water quality reports say the tap water is “safe.”

That does not mean people like it.

Several common complaints drive homeowners to install filters in San Dimas:

- **Hardness.** Does San Dimas have hard water? Yes. It is typically in the “hard” to “very hard” range, which causes scale on fixtures, spots on glass, and mineral buildup in water heaters and appliances.
- **Taste and odor.** Chlorine and byproducts can give water a chemical or swimming pool taste. Some neighborhoods also report earthy or musty notes at certain times of year.
- **Aesthetic issues.** Cloudiness, or “Why is my filtered water cloudy?” often shows up after plumbing work, seasonal changes, or when filters start to clog.

So when you ask, “What is in San Dimas tap water?” you are mainly dealing with calcium and magnesium hardness, chlorine and disinfection byproducts, trace metals, and the usual mix of minerals you [Shower Valve Repair](#) would expect from Southern California sources. Filtration and softening target those specific issues.

What is a water filtration system, really?

People use “water filter” to describe everything from a pitcher in the fridge to a fully plumbed whole house filtration system. For repair decisions, it helps to be specific.

At the residential level, you are usually dealing with one or more of these:

1. Under sink drinking water filters. Cartridge systems that sit under the kitchen sink and feed a dedicated faucet. They often target chlorine, bad taste, odor, and some contaminants.
2. Reverse osmosis (RO) systems. Multi stage systems, usually under the sink, that use a semi permeable membrane to remove dissolved solids. These are common when people want bottled water quality at one tap.
3. Whole house water filters. Large cartridge or tank based filters installed on the main line where water enters the home. These handle chlorine, sediment, and sometimes specific contaminants for the entire house.

4. Water softeners. Ion exchange units that swap hardness minerals (calcium and magnesium) for sodium or potassium. These protect plumbing and appliances rather than changing safety of the water.
5. Combination systems. Many homes in San Dimas have a softener plus a whole house carbon filter, and then perhaps a reverse osmosis unit at the kitchen sink.

When homeowners ask, "How does a water filtration system work?" the short version is this: water passes through one or more media that either physically strain out particles, adsorb contaminants to a surface, or use a membrane to separate pure water from dissolved solids. Each component is tuned to a narrow job.

That narrow focus matters when your system misbehaves. A carbon filter is great at removing chlorine. It does nothing for hardness. An RO membrane will dramatically lower total dissolved solids, but if the prefilters clog, the system may stop producing water entirely.

How these systems fail in the real world

Most of the repair calls I see are rooted in the same small set of problems. You can often understand them just by listening to how the homeowner describes the symptoms.

"Why is my water filtration system not working at all?"

If no water is coming out of your filtered faucet, or your reverse osmosis system is not producing water, the causes are usually straightforward:

- Clogged sediment or carbon prefilter, starving the system of flow.
- Closed or partially closed valve that was never reopened after maintenance.
- Automatic shutoff valve stuck or failed on a reverse osmosis unit.
- Feed line kinked or pinched under the sink.
- In rare cases, a failed RO membrane that is so fouled it effectively blocks flow.

In San Dimas, with relatively hard water and significant sediment at times, the "Why is no water coming out of my water filter?" question is often solved by replacing cartridges that were long overdue.

"Why is my water filter leaking?"

Leaks concern people the most, and rightly so. I have seen a slow drip under a sink go unnoticed until it destroyed cabinetry.

Common sources:

- Loose or cross threaded filter housings on under sink or whole house filters.
- Worn O rings that should have been lubricated or replaced during service.
- Cracked housings from over tightening or from freezing. Yes, even in San Dimas, a garage mounted filter can freeze and break during a rare cold snap if the area drops below 32°F for long enough.
- Poorly installed saddle valves or quick connect fittings on RO systems.

If you are wondering how to find a leak in a water filtration system, wipe all components dry, then run water and inspect each connection with a bright flashlight. Drips often appear along the bottom of housings or at push fit joints.

When there is active dripping from threaded connections or housings in rigid pipe, a plumber is usually the safer call. When the leak is clearly coming from within the filter assembly itself, a water treatment pro or the original

installer may be better, because they will recognize brand specific quirks.

“Why is my water filtration system slow?”

Slow flow through a filtered faucet, a refrigerator dispenser, or a whole house filter almost always traces back to restriction.

The top culprits:

- Sediment clogging the first stage cartridge.
- Fines and carbon dust from new cartridges that were not flushed properly.
- A failing pressure regulator or an incorrectly set regulator on the filter line.
- Excessively small feed tubing on longer runs.

If the pressure is good at unfiltered taps but weak at filtered taps, the issue is in the filtration path. That is where a filtration specialist shines. If the whole house has low pressure, even with filters bypassed, that is a plumbing or supply issue, and a plumber or the water company should investigate.

“Why does my filtered water taste bad or smell funny?”

You paid for better water, not worse. Bad taste, odor, or appearance raise a flag that something in the treatment train is off.

Typical questions I hear:

- Why is my water filter not removing chlorine anymore?
- Why does my filtered water taste bad after a few months?
- Why is my filtered water cloudy right after changing filters?

Often the answer is simple aging. Carbon has a finite capacity. Once exhausted, it stops removing chlorine and organics, and those flavors and aromas come right through. Cloudiness after a filter change can come from tiny air bubbles or carbon fines and usually clears after a thorough flush.

If your water still smells strongly of chlorine right after installation or cartridge replacement, the system might be undersized, plumbed incorrectly, or using the wrong media. That is a design and configuration issue, and a water treatment pro is better equipped than a general plumber.

“Why is my water still hard after filtration?”

This is a big one in San Dimas. People say, “We installed a filter, but the water is still hard. Why is my water still hard after filtration?”

The blunt answer: most filters do not remove hardness at all. You need a water softener or a specific anti scale system for that.



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If you already have a softener and see scale again, the softener may be:

- Out of salt or using the wrong salt.
- Bypassed after recent plumbing work.
- Stuck in a regeneration cycle.
- Misprogrammed for local hardness.

"Why is my water softener not working with my filter?" usually comes down to incorrect plumbing order or a bypass valve left in the wrong position. Many homes should have the whole house filter and softener working together, not fighting each other.

Odd noises, air, and other annoyances

Homeowners also ask, "Why is my water filter making a noise?" Gurgling under the sink or hissing near a whole house filter generally means trapped air, a partial blockage, or pressure issues. It is rarely dangerous, but it often signals flow restriction that will get worse.

An RO drain line loudly dumping into the sink drain is normal, though it can be reduced. Loud knocking or hammering, on the other hand, should be checked by a plumber as it relates to pressure surges.

How often should filters and systems be maintained?

One of the biggest predictors of whether a system will need repair is simple: did anyone actually maintain it on schedule?

When people ask, "How often should water filters be replaced?" or "How often should a water filtration system be serviced?" I do not give a one size answer. It depends on water quality, usage, and the specific hardware. Still, there are solid general ranges.

For typical San Dimas homes:

- Sediment and carbon prefilters: every 6 to 12 months, sooner if you see pressure drop or taste changes.
- Refrigerator and inline fridge filters: about every 6 months.
- Reverse osmosis carbon and sediment stages: 6 to 12 months.
- Reverse osmosis membrane: often 2 to 5 years, assuming good prefiltration and reasonable usage.
- Whole house carbon tank systems: media change every 5 to 10 years, depending on size and chlorine levels.
- Water softeners: salt refilled as needed, with a full checkup every 1 to 2 years.

That ties into common questions such as, "How long do water filtration systems last?" and "When should I replace my water filtration system entirely?" A well maintained under sink system can last 8 to 15 years. Tank based whole house filters and softeners often go 10 to 20 years with proper service and occasional valve repairs.

When housings, valves, and heads are cracking or obsolete and parts are hard to find, it is usually time to replace the whole assembly instead of chasing repeated repairs.

Costs in San Dimas: repair vs replacement

Budgets matter. When someone asks, "How much does it cost to repair a water filtration system?" they are really asking whether the fix is worth it or if they should put money toward a new system.

Actual numbers vary by company and scope, but these ranges are realistic for the San Dimas area:

- Simple cartridge change on an under sink filter: often a DIY job with 30 to 80 dollars in parts. If you hire it out, expect 120 to 250 dollars including labor.
- Reverse osmosis tune up with new prefilters, postfilter, and a check of the membrane: 150 to 350 dollars, depending on the brand and number of stages.
- Replacing an RO membrane: 100 to 250 dollars including labor.
- Fixing a minor leak at a filter housing or O ring: often in the 150 to 300 dollar range, depending on access and whether parts are on the truck.
- Major re piping or relocating a whole house system: 400 to 1,000 dollars or more, because that is essentially plumbing work with permits and wall work in some cases.

So, how much does a water filtration system cost if you replace instead of repair? As of the mid 2020s:

- Basic under sink two stage filter systems: 150 to 400 dollars in equipment, plus 150 to 350 dollars for installation.
- Decent reverse osmosis systems: 250 to 900 dollars for equipment, 250 to 500 dollars for installation.
- Whole house cartridge filters for chlorine and sediment: 300 to 800 dollars for equipment, 300 to 800 dollars for installation.
- Whole house tank based carbon systems and softeners: often 1,500 to 4,000 dollars installed, depending on size, controls, and water conditions.

That leads straight into the question, "Is it worth repairing a water filtration system, or is it cheaper to repair or replace a water filtration system?" My rule of thumb: if the repair is less than about 30 percent of the cost of a

comparable new system, and the existing system is under 8 to 10 years old, repair usually makes sense. If you are looking at several hundred dollars of work on a 15 year old unit with obsolete parts, replacement is often smarter.

Do I need a plumber for water filter repair, or a water treatment pro?

Here is where most of the confusion lies.

Both plumbers and water treatment specialists work on systems tied directly into your pipes. Both may carry licenses in California that allow them to make plumbing connections. The difference is focus.

Plumbers are experts in the broader plumbing system: supply, drainage, venting, water heaters, valves, and fixtures. Water treatment professionals specialize in filtration, softening, and water chemistry.

If you ask, "Who repairs water filtration systems?" the honest answer is that both can, but they are not interchangeable on every job.

Here is a compact way to sort it out:

1. Call a plumber when you have clear plumbing issues around the filter, such as a cracked copper line, leaking shutoff valve, frozen and burst pipes, or changes needed at the main line or water heater.
2. Call a water treatment specialist when the problem is inside the filtration or softening equipment: bad taste, poor performance, odd cycles, error codes, media replacements, or questions about what the system actually does.
3. Call the original installer if the system is still under warranty, if it is a proprietary or branded installation, or if you have no idea what was installed. They will have records and part numbers.
4. When in doubt, many good companies in San Dimas have both licensed plumbers and water treatment techs. Ask the scheduler who will be dispatched and what their focus is.

To make that even clearer, here is a high level comparison.

| Situation or Question | Better First Call | | --- | --- | | "Why is no water coming out of my water filter at the kitchen sink, but the rest of the house is fine?" | Water treatment pro | | "A pipe near my whole house filter burst and is spraying." | Plumber | | "Why is my reverse osmosis system not producing water after I changed cartridges?" | Water treatment pro | | "I need my main shutoff relocated so I can add a whole house filter." | Plumber | | "What is the best water filtration system for hard water in San Dimas?" | Water treatment pro, possibly in cooperation with plumber for installation |

When you ask a company, "Do I need a plumber for water filter repair, or can you handle both?" listen for a specific answer. The best outfits are clear about the skill set of the person they are sending.

What you can reasonably do yourself

Many San Dimas homeowners could avoid service calls entirely with basic knowledge and a little confidence.

If you are wondering, "Can I repair my water filtration system myself?" the fair answer is: sometimes. There is a big difference between changing a cartridge and cutting into copper.

DIY is appropriate for straightforward, low pressure tasks, especially if you follow the manufacturer's instructions and use proper tools.

Typical do it yourself tasks include:

1. Changing filter cartridges. If you ask, "Can I change my water filter myself?" the answer is almost always yes for under sink, fridge, and simple whole house cartridge systems. Learn how to change a water filter cartridge properly, including shutting off valves, relieving pressure, replacing O rings, and flushing.
2. Resetting electronic heads. Many systems have a reset button or simple programming steps after changing filters. "How do I reset my water filtration system?" is usually answered in the manual or a short support video from the manufacturer.
3. Cleaning and sanitizing housings. When you see slime, discoloration, or odor in clear housings, it is time to clean those components with a mild bleach solution and rinse thoroughly.
4. Removing a stuck water filter. If you have a stuck cartridge, pressure might not be fully relieved or the housing may be overtightened. Use the proper wrench, support the piping, and never use pipe wrenches or excessive force that can crack plastic.
5. Simple pressure adjustments. "How do I increase water pressure on my filtration system?" often means checking that the feed valves are fully open, that any built in regulator is not set too low, and that prefilters are not overdue for replacement.

Where DIY crosses into risk is when you:

- Cut, solder, or glue new plumbing connections.
- Modify drain lines for RO systems.
- Move or reconfigure whole house systems at the main line.
- Attempt to fix leaks in rigid piping without training.

Those tasks are squarely in plumber territory in California, and mistakes can get expensive fast.

Common water filter problems and what they often mean

It helps to see symptom patterns the way a technician does. People wonder, "What are the most common water filter problems?" and whether those problems mean the filter is "bad" or just neglected.

A few patterns, from the field:

If your water filter keeps clogging quickly, there may be higher than expected sediment in your line, construction nearby, or aging galvanized pipes shedding rust. In that case, adding a dedicated sediment prefilter or upsizing existing filters can be smarter than constant cartridge changes.

If you ask, "How do I know if my water filter is bad?" pay attention to taste, odor, and flow. When chlorine comes back, when water starts to taste flat or musty, when flow drops sharply, or when manufacturer rated time or gallons are exceeded, the filter is functionally done even if water still passes through.

When your reverse osmosis system slows and the tank no longer fills, the membrane may be fouled, the tank bladder may be failing, or the automatic shutoff and check valves may be worn. "How do you repair a reverse osmosis system?" usually starts with checking prefilters and tank pressure before replacing bigger components.

For whole house filters, "How do you fix a whole house water filter that has low pressure or bypass issues?" often comes down to replacing cartridges, cleaning out housings, and making sure bypass valves are in the correct position. For tank type systems, the control head may need service, seals, or piston rebuilds.

Under sink filters typically fail at O rings, plastic fittings, or old tubing. "How do you fix an under sink water filter that is dripping or loose?" is usually a matter of shutting off water, depressurizing, re seating or replacing O rings, and tightening connections to manufacturer spec instead of over tightening by feel.

A water filtration system can sometimes freeze and break in exposed garages, crawl spaces, or exterior walls, particularly whole house filters and softeners. This is less common in San Dimas than in colder climates, but I have seen cracked housings after rare winter cold snaps. If you have equipment in marginal areas, insulation and minimal heat can save a lot of money.

Matching your system to San Dimas water for fewer repairs

A final, practical point: the right system for San Dimas water will have an easier life and need fewer repairs.

A good setup for many homes here includes:

- Sediment protection at the point of entry to protect valves, heaters, and fixtures.
- Adequate carbon contact time for chlorine and taste issues, not just a tiny cartridge asked to handle the whole house.
- Realistic sizing for flow demand, so pressure remains acceptable when multiple fixtures run.
- Proper handling of hardness, typically with a softener or a proven alternative, so your filters and plumbing are not constantly dealing with scale.

When people ask, "What is the best water filtration system for hard water around here?" I focus less on brand and more on matching the technology to local conditions and household habits, then making sure someone actually maintains it on schedule.

A well designed system, cared for properly, avoids many of the headaches behind those big questions:

- Why is my water filtration system not working?
- Why is my reverse osmosis system not producing water?
- Why does my filtered water taste bad suddenly?
- Why does my water filter keep clogging?
- Why is my water filtration system slow or noisy?

And it makes the choice between plumber and water treatment pro much simpler. When the pipes themselves are healthy and the equipment is correctly sized and installed, most issues become either routine maintenance or straightforward, affordable repairs.

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