

A dead faucet on a water filter is frustrating. You invested in cleaner water, maybe to deal with San Dimas hard water or the taste of chlorine, and now nothing comes out. Before you assume the system is ruined, it helps to understand how these systems work, what typically fails, and what makes San Dimas water a bit unique.

This guide comes from what I see in local homes again and again: the same handful of problems repeating across reverse osmosis systems, under sink filters, refrigerator filters, and whole house filtration.

## **A quick look at San Dimas water and why people filter it**

Most homes in San Dimas receive water from a mix of imported surface water and local groundwater. Depending on your address, your water may come from:

- The City of San Dimas Water Division, which purchases treated water through regional wholesalers.
- Golden State Water Company, a private utility that also draws from a mix of imported and groundwater sources.

Water from these sources is treated and regulated. In normal conditions, San Dimas water is legally safe to drink according to state and federal standards. That said, “legally safe” is not the same as “tastes great” or “ideal for your plumbing.”

Common reasons San Dimas homeowners install a water filtration system:

First, hardness. Regional data for this part of Los Angeles County generally shows moderately hard to hard water, often over 120 milligrams per liter of hardness as calcium carbonate. That hardness leads to scale in kettles, water heaters, and around fixtures.

Second, chlorine and chloramine. Both providers use disinfectants that protect against bacteria but can leave an odor or taste. Many people notice this strongly in coffee, tea, and ice.

Third, specific concerns. Some homeowners want extra protection from disinfection byproducts, trace metals, or to improve taste for babies, elderly relatives, or people with health conditions.

So while San Dimas tap water is considered safe to drink, there are solid reasons people ask: What is a water filtration system, and what is the best water filtration system for hard water or for chlorine?



## What a water filtration system actually does

A "water filtration system" is a broad term. At the simplest level, it is any device that water passes through to remove or reduce unwanted substances. How does a water filtration system work in practice? It depends on the technology.

Typical systems in San Dimas homes include:

Pitcher and fridge filters

These rely on a small carbon cartridge that adsorbs chlorine, some organic chemicals, and a bit of odor. They improve taste but do not soften water or remove most dissolved minerals.

Under sink carbon filters

These are larger versions of pitcher filters, often with one or two canisters. City water flows through sediment and carbon cartridges before reaching a dedicated drinking faucet. They mainly handle taste, odor, and some chemicals.

Reverse osmosis (RO) systems

Very common in Southern California kitchens. An RO system uses several stages: sediment, carbon, an RO membrane, and a small storage tank. RO can dramatically reduce dissolved solids, including hardness minerals, many metals, and a wide range of contaminants. It is also the system most likely to "stop producing water" when it needs attention.

Whole house filtration systems

Installed on the main water line, often in the garage or at an outside wall. They can include sediment prefilters, carbon tanks to remove chlorine, and sometimes specialty media for iron or other local issues. They improve the water for every tap and protect plumbing, but they usually do not soften water.

## Water softeners

Technically these are not filters, but they are often bundled with filtration. A softener uses ion exchange resin to remove hardness minerals and replace them with sodium or potassium. If your water is still hard after filtration, you may have only a filter, not a softener, or your softener is not working correctly.

Understanding what you have is the first step. Many owners say “I have a filter under the sink” but actually have a four stage RO with a tank, a remineralization cartridge, and sometimes a UV light. The more complex the system, the more potential points of failure.

# No water coming out of your water filter: the most common causes

When someone in San Dimas calls and says, “Why is no water coming out of my water filter?” the root cause usually lands in one of a few categories.

## 1. A shutoff valve is closed or partly closed

Many systems have multiple valves:

- A small saddle or angle valve on the cold line feeding an under sink filter.
- A bypass valve around a whole house filter or softener.
- A tank valve on a reverse osmosis system.

It sounds obvious, but I have seen plenty of “broken” filters that started working again when we fully opened a stiff or half-closed valve. If you recently had a plumber, handyman, or appliance installer in the house, always suspect a closed valve first.

## 2. A clogged filter cartridge

San Dimas has enough sediment and hardness that cartridges can clog faster than the marketing brochures suggest. If your house had recent plumbing work, a main break, or a water shutdown, disturbed sediment can plug a sediment filter in days.

Signs this is the issue:

- The system was getting slower over weeks before it stopped.
- Only the filtered line is affected. Your main cold tap still runs strong.
- The filter is past its rated capacity or has never been changed.

If you are wondering, “How do I know if my water filter is bad?” lack of flow combined with age is a strong clue. For typical residential systems, how often should water filters be replaced? As a practical guideline:

- Sediment prefilters: 6 to 12 months.
- Carbon cartridges: 6 to 12 months, depending on chlorine levels and use.
- RO membranes: about 2 to 5 years.
- Whole house carbon tanks: often 5 to 10 years for the media, but this varies widely.

Local water quality, usage, and plumbing work can shorten those intervals.

### 3. Reverse osmosis tank or membrane issues

If your reverse osmosis system is not producing water, the storage tank and membrane are prime suspects.

An RO system normally works like this: water slowly passes through the membrane and fills the tank to about two thirds to three quarters of the incoming pressure. When you open the faucet, the tank pushes water out quickly. Several things can go wrong:

- The tank bladder fails and the tank waterlogs.
- The air pressure in the tank drops far outside the typical 5 to 8 psi range when empty.
- The membrane clogs, so almost no water reaches the tank.
- A check valve or flow restrictor sticks closed.

Symptoms of tank or membrane trouble:

- You get a brief burst of water from the RO faucet, then it drops to a trickle.
- It takes many hours to refill the tank for a single pitcher.
- The system makes constant drain noise yet the tank never fills well.
- After years of use, the filtered water tastes bad or “flat” compared to before.

“How do you repair a reverse osmosis system?” depends on which of these has failed. Membranes and prefilters are fairly straightforward for an experienced homeowner to replace. Diagnosing a bad tank bladder or a stuck valve is trickier, and often where a pro earns their fee.

### 4. Frozen or physically damaged components

San Dimas is usually mild, but garages and exterior filter housings can still see cold snaps. Can a water filter system freeze and break? Yes. Any water filled housing, elbow, or valve can crack if it freezes. The damage is not always obvious immediately.

Clues that freezing played a role:

- The system is in an unheated garage or outside wall.
- You recently had a cold night followed by a leak or sudden loss of flow.
- The plastic filter sumps show hairline cracks.

If there is visible cracking or you suspect freeze damage, do not keep pressurizing the system. Shut it off, relieve pressure, and repair or replace the damaged parts before testing again. Otherwise you risk a very fast, very messy leak later.

### 5. Incorrect installation or recent changes

Sometimes a water filtration system is slow or dead from day one because of improper installation. Common mistakes I see:

- Inlet and outlet lines reversed on whole house systems.
- Check valves installed backward.
- Feed line connected to hot instead of cold.
- Under sink filters tied into a line already starved for pressure.
- No allowance for San Dimas hardness when choosing or sizing cartridges.

If you just installed a system and it never worked right, or you moved the unit, changed cartridges, or added a softener, any of those changes may explain why your water filtration system is not working.

## **A simple at home checklist when no water comes out**

Here is a short, practical sequence I walk homeowners through on the phone before I schedule a truck. Follow it slowly and note where things change.

1. Confirm that your main water supply and the affected tap work normally without the filter (for example, the main cold faucet at the kitchen sink).
2. Trace and fully open all small shutoff valves feeding the filter or RO system, including tank valves.
3. Look at the filter housings or cartridges. If they are visibly dirty, deformed, or very old, consider replacing them and retesting.
4. Gently wiggle tubing and fittings while watching for leaks or kinks. Straighten any sharp bends that might be cutting off flow.
5. If you have an RO system, close the tank valve, open the RO faucet, and see if a slow but steady stream appears. That can help separate tank problems from feed issues.

If you are uncomfortable with any of those steps, or you find a leak you cannot stop, that is a good moment to pause and call for help.

## **Other common water filter symptoms and what they mean**

A system that stops entirely is dramatic, but most filters send up signals earlier. Paying attention to these early signs can save you from leaks, ruined cabinets, or a failed membrane.

### **Slow water or low pressure after the filter**

“What causes low water pressure after a water filter?” is one of the most frequent questions I hear.

Typical causes include:

- A clogged sediment or carbon cartridge.
- A cartridge with too fine a micron rating for the incoming sediment level.
- Scale buildup in small orifices, especially with San Dimas hard water.
- A pressure regulator on the home set too low, compounded by restrictive filters.
- On RO systems, a nearly full tank with poor tank pressure.

“How do I increase water pressure on my filtration system?” usually comes down to relieving those bottlenecks. That can mean changing to a larger cartridge, adjusting the regulator, adding a sediment prefilter, or in some cases upgrading the entire system to better match actual water conditions.

### **Filtered water that is cloudy**

“Why is my filtered water cloudy?” has different answers depending on equipment.

Microbubbles are the most common and least harmful. If the cloudiness clears from the bottom up in a glass within a minute or two, you are looking at trapped air, not dirt.

More concerning causes include:

- Very fine air mixed with water after filter cartridge changes.
- New carbon cartridges shedding harmless, but unsightly, carbon fines.
- A failing RO membrane letting higher dissolved solids through.
- Biological growth inside a seldom used filter line.

If the water stays milky or you see particles that do not clear quickly, especially combined with odd taste or odor, it is time to service the system. Leaving it alone can turn a minor nuisance into a health concern.

## **Filtered water that tastes bad or smells off**

“Why does my filtered water taste bad?” is another signal you should not ignore.

Common culprits:

- Spent carbon that can no longer remove chlorine and organics.
- Biofilm growing in lines or storage tanks that are rarely flushed.
- A softener putting too much sodium into the water for some palates.
- Contamination during filter changes if hands, tools, or housings were not clean.

A simple test is to compare unfiltered tap water, filtered water, and a known good source like bottled water. If the filter water tastes worse than raw tap, something in the system has failed or is overdue for replacement.

## **Water is still hard after filtration**

If you installed equipment for San Dimas hard water and still get spots and scale, a few possibilities explain why your water is still hard after filtration:

- You have only a carbon filter, not a softener. Filters do not remove hardness minerals.
- The softener is present but out of salt, in bypass, or misprogrammed.
- The resin bed is fouled or exhausted and needs cleaning or replacement.
- High hardness and usage demand a larger unit than was installed.

Sometimes people ask, “Why is my water softener not working with my filter?” when the problem is actually plumbing layout. If the softener is piped incorrectly, some fixtures may still be drawing [water softener repair san dimas](#) hard water before the softener, so scale continues.

## **Leaks and strange noises**

“Why is my water filter leaking?” and “Why is my water filter making a noise?” often have the same underlying issue: trapped air and pressure fluctuations.

Leaks commonly come from:

- Worn or twisted O-rings on filter housings.
- Housings overtightened or cross threaded during cartridge changes.
- Freezing or impact damage to plastic housings.
- Push fit connectors not fully seated or cut tubing ends that are not square.

To find a leak in your water filtration system, dry all visible surfaces, then run the system while watching closely. Start at the inlet and move downstream. Many leaks show up only under pressure or only while a faucet is running.

Noises, particularly in RO systems, usually come from:

- Air purging after service.
- Drain flow through small tubing, especially if not well secured.
- Water hammer from quick closing valves.

If the noise is new and accompanied by reduced performance or leaks, have the system inspected. If it is a long standing gentle “whoosh” from an RO drain line and everything else checks out, it is usually normal.

## **Maintenance: how often and how much**

“How often should water filters be replaced?” and “How often should a water filtration system be serviced?” are not just technical questions. They are budget questions.

There is no single schedule that fits every home, but for a typical San Dimas household using city water, these ranges are realistic:

- Undersink or fridge carbon cartridges: about once a year.
- Sediment prefilters: every 6 to 12 months, sooner if you see a lot of visible debris.
- RO prefilters and postfilters: once a year.
- RO membranes: about every 2 to 5 years, depending on hardness, pressure, and usage.
- Whole house filter cartridges: 6 to 18 months, heavily dependent on sediment load and size.
- Water softener service: resin checks and valve inspection every 1 to 3 years.

“How long do water filtration systems last?” The housings, manifolds, and tanks often last 10 to 20 years or more if not abused. Electronics, control heads, and plastic fittings usually fail sooner. When should you replace your water filtration system instead of repairing it? Consider replacement when:

- The unit is more than 10 to 15 years old and key parts are no longer supported.
- Multiple major components have failed within a short period.
- The system type no longer fits your needs, for example you have added a family member with special water requirements.
- Repair costs are approaching half or more of a modern, more efficient replacement.

## **Repair and replacement costs: what to expect**

People understandably ask, “How much does a water filtration system cost?” and “How much does it cost to repair a water filtration system?” There is a wide range, but for San Dimas style systems, you can use these rough bands as a sanity check:

1. Basic under sink carbon filter system: a few hundred dollars installed, with annual filter changes in the tens of dollars.
2. Under sink reverse osmosis system: low to mid hundreds for standard systems, more if you add premium faucets or remineralization. Annual filter changes are usually under a couple hundred dollars in parts.
3. Whole house sediment and carbon filtration: from the mid hundreds for simple cartridge based systems to several thousand for large backwashing carbon tanks or specialty media.
4. Water softeners: mid hundreds for basic units, up to several thousand for high end, high capacity, or twin tank systems, plus ongoing salt costs.

5. Typical repairs: minor work like replacing cartridges, O-rings, or a simple valve often falls under a few hundred dollars. Bigger jobs involving control heads, tanks, or major re plumbing can reach into the higher hundreds.

Is it worth repairing a water filtration system, or is it cheaper to repair or replace? For most relatively recent systems with good original components, repair is worth it if a trusted technician believes the core of the system is sound. When a very old, off brand system starts leaking, clogging, and failing repeatedly, replacement often makes more sense financially and for peace of mind.

## DIY vs hiring a professional

Many homeowners wonder, "Can I repair my water filtration system myself?" and "Do I need a plumber for water filter repair?"

Routine maintenance is very practical for a careful homeowner:

- How do I change a water filter cartridge? Shut off the feed water, relieve pressure by opening the filtered faucet, place a towel or pan under the housings, unscrew the housings with the supplied wrench, swap cartridges, lubricate and seat O-rings, reassemble, then slowly turn water back on while checking for leaks. Each system has its own twist, but that is the basic pattern.
- Can I change my water filter myself? In many cases, yes, as long as you are comfortable working with small plumbing parts and follow the manufacturer's instructions closely.

Where professionals earn their keep is in diagnosis and more invasive repairs:

- Who repairs water filtration systems? In San Dimas, that can be dedicated water treatment companies, some plumbing contractors, and occasionally appliance service firms for fridge filters and built in RO units.
- Do I need a plumber for water filter repair? If you suspect hidden leaks, control valve failures, major re piping, or if you simply are not comfortable turning off the main and opening plumbing, a licensed plumber or water treatment specialist is the safer choice.

Specific examples where I recommend calling a pro:

- The system is connected to a complex manifold with the softener, irrigation, and multiple branches.
- You suspect a hidden leak, perhaps due to moisture in the cabinet or unexplained water use.
- The system repeatedly clogs or produces off tasting water despite regular cartridge changes.
- You are dealing with a stuck water filter housing that will not budge, and you are tempted to put your full weight on it or use improvised tools.

"How do you remove a stuck water filter?" usually involves the manufacturer's wrench, two hands on a steady housing bracket, and sometimes a strap wrench. If the housing refuses to turn, you risk breaking pipes or the housing itself. At that point it is often wiser to stop rather than escalate.

## Matching your system to San Dimas conditions

"What are the most common water filter problems?" in San Dimas are not random. They flow from the local water profile.

Hardness and scale cause:

- Faster clogging of fine sediment filters.
- More frequent RO membrane replacements.

- Scale in small orifices and RO drain restrictors.

Chlorine and chloramine drive:

- Carbon exhaustion that leads to filters not removing chlorine effectively.
- Complaints of bad taste if cartridges are left in too long.
- Degradation of rubber seals and O-rings over time.

To reduce headaches, it is worth asking at the start: What is the best water filtration system for hard water and chlorine in this area? In many homes, the most robust setup is a properly sized softener combined with a whole house carbon system and an RO unit at the kitchen sink. Not every household needs that full suite, but if you run a large family, lots of laundry, and expensive fixtures, the combination can pay for itself in reduced maintenance and longer equipment life.

Whatever you choose, remember that any system, even a simple under sink filter, needs routine care. Filters that sit untouched for years become, at best, ineffective and, at worst, a source of contamination. Regular service, matched to how long water filtration systems last and how heavily you use them, is the key to keeping flow strong and water quality high.

## **When your filter stops: how to think about next steps**

When a homeowner in San Dimas calls me about a dead filter, I walk them through three questions:

- Is your tap water safe enough to drink temporarily if you bypass the system? In most cases here, the answer is yes, even if it does not taste ideal.
- How critical is the filter for your household? For some, it is a comfort feature. For others, especially with medical needs, it is essential.
- How old is the system, and what is its repair history?

Those answers shape whether we focus on quick repair, deeper overhaul, or system replacement. Sometimes a simple valve adjustment and fresh cartridges put everything right. Other times, years of deferred maintenance add up, and replacing the system is not a luxury but a necessity.

If your water filtration system is not working, or no water is coming out of your water filter at all, start with the basics you can safely check: valves, cartridges, visible leaks. Then, if the problem is deeper, do not hesitate to bring in someone who works with these systems every day. That combination of homeowner attention and professional support keeps your water clean, your cabinets dry, and your system quietly doing its job in the background.

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