

If you live in San Dimas and your water still leaves spots on dishes, crust on faucets, or your skin feels dry after a shower, you are not imagining it. Our area sees consistently hard to very hard water, and the wrong filtration setup can leave you with all the expense and none of the benefits.

I spend a lot of time in homes where people say, "We installed a filter, but nothing really changed." By the time I arrive, someone has already spent good money on a system that was never designed to fix hard water in the first place.

This is a guide to help you understand what kind of water you have, why your current water filtration system may not be working the way you expect, and what actually works for San Dimas hard water.

Hard water in San Dimas: what you are dealing with

San Dimas is served by local municipal utilities that blend groundwater with imported supplies. The exact mix changes, but the pattern is consistent: hardness usually tests in the "hard" to "very hard" zone, often somewhere around 150 to 250 parts per million (ppm) as calcium carbonate, sometimes higher.

Hard water is mainly caused by dissolved calcium and magnesium. They are not normally a health concern, but they are a headache around the house. Over time, they:

- scale water heaters and shorten their life
- leave spots on dishes and glass
- dry out skin and hair
- clog showerheads and faucet aerators
- reduce the efficiency of dishwashers and washing machines

So if you are asking, "Does San Dimas have hard water?" the practical answer is yes. The key is understanding what tools actually deal with hardness and which ones do not.

Filtration vs softening: clearing up the biggest misunderstanding

Most of the disappointment I see comes from a basic confusion between two different things:

Filtration removes contaminants like chlorine, sediment, some metals, and many organic compounds. Softening treats hardness minerals.

When someone installs a filter pitcher, a refrigerator filter, or a simple cartridge under the sink, then asks, "Why is my water still hard after filtration?" the answer is almost always that they bought a filter, not a softener.

What is a water filtration system?

Broadly, a water filtration system is anything that passes water through media or membranes to remove unwanted substances. Common types include:

- sediment filters that catch sand and rust
- carbon filters that remove chlorine and improve taste and odor
- reverse osmosis (RO) systems that push water through a membrane to remove many dissolved solids
- specialty media that target specific metals or chemicals

How does a water filtration system work in practice? Water enters the housing, flows through the filter media, contaminants are trapped or adsorbed, and cleaner water exits. The exact mechanisms vary: physical straining, adsorption, ion exchange, or membrane separation.

Many people install these and expect softer water on their skin or no more scale on the glass shower door. A standard filter does not change calcium and magnesium hardness in a meaningful way.

What actually softens water?

Traditional softening uses ion exchange. A water softener tank is filled with resin beads charged with sodium or potassium ions. As hard water passes through, calcium and magnesium ions swap places with sodium or potassium on the resin. Hardness is removed, and the resin is periodically “regenerated” with a brine solution.

This is why a water softener is fundamentally different from a basic filtration system. It is also why a lot of frustration starts when someone installs a carbon filter or RO system and expects it to behave like a softener.

Reverse osmosis can reduce hardness at a single point of use, but it is inefficient and slow for treating all the water in a home. It is better suited for drinking and cooking water.

Is San Dimas water safe to drink?

Municipal water in San Dimas is regulated to meet state and federal standards. In general, that means it is considered safe to drink from a contaminant compliance standpoint. That does not mean it always tastes good, or that it is free from everything you might want to remove such as chlorine, disinfection byproducts, or trace metals.

So when people ask, “What is in San Dimas tap water?” the honest answer is: a blend of minerals, disinfectants like chlorine or chloramine, and trace amounts of various regulated contaminants below legal limits, plus some unregulated compounds. Exact details are in your local water quality report.

For many homeowners, the motivation for a water filtration system is less about safety and more about taste, odor, scale, and the desire to be proactive about long term exposure to low level contaminants.

Why your current system is not fixing hard water

If you already installed a system and your problems are not going away, start with expectations and design before assuming something is broken.

You have filtration where you needed softening

A common scenario in San Dimas: a homeowner buys a whole house “filter” online that uses carbon and a sediment cartridge, then calls later asking, “Why is my water still hard after filtration?” The product description might have promised “luxurious showers” and “spot free dishes,” but the technology inside cannot actually remove hardness minerals.

If there is no resin tank, no salt or potassium tank, and no regeneration cycle, you do not own a traditional softener.



Salt free "conditioners" are another wrinkle. Some use template assisted crystallization or similar methods to reduce scale buildup on surfaces. When installed correctly, they can help with scaling, but they do not typically change the measured hardness. So your test strip will still show hard water, and you can still feel mineral content on your skin, even if new scale forms more slowly.

Your softener or RO is undersized or misconfigured

Sometimes the right type of system is present, but it was never sized or programmed for San Dimas water. Our hardness levels, large households, and older plumbing can strain a marginal setup.

Two examples I see often:

1. A small cabinet softener installed for a family of five, set to regenerate infrequently to "save salt." It exhausts the resin and sends hard water through long before each regeneration.
2. An under sink RO system feeding a fridge and an extra bar sink, using a small tank. The homeowner then complains that the system is slow, and that their reverse osmosis system is not producing water fast enough.

In both cases, the core technology is sound, but sizing and settings are wrong for real world use.

Common problems when filtered water does not behave as expected

Once you know what your system was actually built to do, you can start diagnosing issues. Many of the same questions come up in San Dimas homes.

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

If no water is coming out of your water filter, or you have a dramatic drop in flow, typical causes include:

- clogged sediment or carbon cartridges
- shutoff valves or bypass valves left in the wrong position
- an RO tank that has lost pressure or failed
- a kinked line or debris stuck in a flow restrictor

At the simple end, a completely clogged filter element can slow your system so much that it feels like nothing is happening. At the more complex end, RO systems with multiple components can stop producing water when a single small part fails.

“Why is my reverse osmosis system not producing water?”

Reverse osmosis systems rely on incoming pressure, a functioning membrane, a charged storage tank, and unobstructed drain and feed lines. When production slows or stops, the usual suspects are low incoming water pressure, a fouled membrane, a closed or clogged valve, or a tank bladder that has failed.

Someone in San Dimas might notice this after a city pressure fluctuation, a construction project, or sediment from a line break clogging their prefilters. You can often restore production by replacing filters, checking pressure, and verifying that the drain and feed lines are clear.

“Why is my water filtration system slow?”

Across all systems, slowness almost always traces back to restriction or inadequate pressure. Common causes:

- spent or overloaded media creating resistance
- undersized lines or fittings
- too many fixtures or appliances connected to a point of use filter
- clogged aerators or showerheads downstream collecting sediment and scale

If a system that once flowed well suddenly becomes sluggish, think clogging or valve issues. If it has always been slow, think design and sizing.

“What causes low water pressure after a water filter?”

Most often: a filter that is simply overdue for change. Sediment filters in areas like San Dimas can load up surprisingly fast, especially after utility work or if your home draws from an older galvanized line.

Occasionally, someone installs a high micron sediment filter designed to polish already clean water, then uses it on dirty groundwater or a rusty line. It clogs constantly, and the homeowner concludes the filter “doesn’t work,” when the real issue is mismatch between filter type and water quality.

Taste, odor, and appearance problems after filtration

Even when hardness is not the main issue, people rightly expect their filtered water to taste and look good.

“Why does my filtered water taste bad?”

If your filtered water tastes worse than tap, carbon filters might be overdue for replacement or biologically fouled. Carbon is excellent at removing chlorine and improving taste, but it can also become a breeding ground if left in service far beyond its rated lifespan, particularly in warm climates.

Other causes include:

- stagnant water in rarely used filter lines, such as a spare bar sink
- newly installed filters “off gassing” a bit of manufacturing residue, which usually clears after flushing
- interactions between your plumbing and aggressive filtered water, especially if an RO system discharges through metal lines

If water tasted fine right after installation and slowly degraded, suspect filter age. If it tastes strange immediately and never improves, something in the system design or materials may be at fault.

“Why is my filtered water cloudy?”

Cloudiness right out of the tap that clears from the bottom up often indicates tiny air bubbles, not contamination. This is especially common with new filters or if your municipal utility recently changed pressure or flow. Shake a glass and let it sit for a minute. If the cloudiness disappears, it is usually harmless entrained air.

Persistent haze that does not clear could indicate very fine suspended particles bypassing or overloading the filter, or scaling from extreme hardness, especially when hot water is involved.

“Why is my water filter making a noise or leaking?”

A humming, whooshing, or chattering sound from a water filtration system can come from air trapped in the lines, rapid on and off cycling, or water hammer. Sometimes, a simple slow opening and closing of valves during startup solves it. Other times, a small pressure tank or shock arrestor is needed.

Leaks are more serious. If you are wondering, “Why is my water filter leaking?” common causes include:

- O rings that are missing, twisted, or worn
- housings that were cross threaded or over tightened
- tubing that was not fully seated into quick connect fittings
- freeze damage or UV brittleness in garage and outdoor installations

One subtle source of leaks in San Dimas is garages that swing from hot to cool, with occasional cold snaps. Yes, a water filter system can freeze and break in our climate, especially if it is in an uninsulated exterior wall or garage and night temperatures drop. Damage is not always obvious until you repressurize the system.

How often should filters and systems be serviced?

“How often should water filters be replaced?” and “How often should a water filtration system be serviced?” are the questions that often separate trouble free systems from chronic headaches.

There is no single schedule, because water quality and usage vary, but a practical baseline for typical San Dimas households is:

- sediment and carbon cartridges: every 6 to 12 months, or based on pressure drop and taste
- RO prefilters and postfilters: every 6 to 12 months
- RO membrane: about every 2 to 5 years, depending on hardness and use
- softener resin: 10 to 20 years is common, with brine tank checks at least annually
- whole house systems: a checkup every 1 to 2 years to verify valves, regeneration settings, and media condition

“How long do water filtration systems last?” depends heavily on build quality and maintenance. A cheaply built under sink system might start causing trouble in 3 to 5 years. A well built softener or whole house carbon filter can run for 10 to 20 years with proper servicing and periodic media replacement.

Knowing “When should I replace my water filtration system?” comes down to a combination of age, repair history, parts availability, and water quality performance. If you are replacing major components every year or your water tests never quite look right, it can be cheaper and safer to start over with a properly sized, modern setup.

Is it cheaper to repair or replace a water filtration system?

People often hesitate on service calls because they do not know if it is worth repairing a water filtration system that already disappointed them. The honest answer depends strongly on what you own.

As a rough guide:

- Simple cartridge housings and quality manifolds are usually worth repairing as long as parts are available and there is no major cracking or UV damage.
- Mid range RO systems with reputable brand components are often worth fixing, especially if the core manifold and tank are sound. Membranes and faucets are affordable to replace compared to a full new system.
- Very old softeners with obsolete valves or heavy internal scaling are often false economies to rebuild, especially when water hardness and usage have changed since original installation.

“How much does a water filtration system cost?” ranges widely. Basic under sink drinking water systems start in the low hundreds installed. Whole house filtration and softening for San Dimas can run into the low to mid thousands, depending on size, complexity, and whether you need combination filtration and softening.

On the repair side, “How much does it cost to repair a water filtration system?” can be as low as the cost of a few cartridges if you do it yourself, up to a few hundred dollars for professional diagnostics, parts, and labor on complex systems.

A good rule of thumb: if a repair costs more than about half of a high quality replacement, and the system is older or has a poor service history, replacement deserves serious consideration.

What maintenance does a water filtration system need?

Most homeowners can comfortably handle day to day care, especially once someone walks them through it. Basic maintenance revolves around three things: timely filter changes, periodic sanitizing or flushing, and visual inspections for leaks and corrosion.

This is where a short checklist is helpful.

- Know your schedule: mark filter change dates and expected service intervals on the system or in your phone.
- Monitor performance: pay attention to taste, odor, and pressure changes, which often indicate filters are due or something is wrong.
- Inspect visually: every month or two, look for signs of moisture, corrosion, or salt bridging in softener brine tanks.
- Protect from extremes: avoid direct sun on plastic housings and insulate or protect systems in garages or exterior walls from unexpected cold snaps.
- Test periodically: use hardness and TDS tests or lab reports every year or two to confirm the system is doing its job.

Proactive care costs far less than cleaning up after a surprise leak under a sink or in a garage.

Diy vs professional service: where to draw the line

“Can I repair my water filtration system myself?” and “Can I change my water filter myself?” come up constantly. The answer is usually yes for basic tasks, provided you are comfortable with plumbing and follow instructions.

Simple homeowner friendly tasks

Most homeowners can safely:

- change a water filter cartridge, using proper shutoff valves and relieving pressure first
- reset a water filtration system after a filter change, using the manufacturer’s procedure
- clean aerators and showerheads clogged with scale
- top up softener salt and break up mild salt bridges
- remove a stuck water filter by carefully using strap wrenches or manufacturer tools, as long as you avoid over torque and cracking housings

“How do I change a water filter cartridge?” is usually printed on the housing or the replacement cartridge: shut off water, relieve pressure with a bypass or faucet, unscrew the housing, swap the cartridge, check and lubricate the O ring, reinstall hand tight, then slowly repressurize while checking for leaks.

When you should call a pro

“Do I need a plumber for water filter repair?” or a specialist? When you hit any of these realities:

- leaks behind walls, ceilings, or beyond visible fittings
- electrical issues with control valves, pumps, or pressure switches
- persistent hardness despite a softener that seems to be running normally
- recurring clogging that suggests iron, manganese, or unusual sediment in the supply
- big swings in water quality after changes in the municipal system

“Who repairs water filtration systems?” varies. Some plumbers are excellent with filtration, others prefer to leave it to dedicated water treatment companies. In San Dimas, you will likely find both options. What matters is that whoever you hire understands both local water conditions and the specific technology in your home.

Signs of a bad or failing water filtration system

You do not always need lab tests to know something is wrong. “What are signs of a bad water filtration system?” and “How do I know if my water filter is bad?” come down to noticing changes and patterns.

Typical warning signs:

Persistent bad taste or odor, especially if it creeps in after months of good performance. A significant drop in water pressure or flow through filtered lines only. Visible discoloration or slime in filter housings, sumps, or clear tubing. Repeated leaks around the same fittings, even after reseating and replacing O rings. Softener that seems to regenerate but you still feel hard water on your skin and see scale.

If your water softener is not working with your filter, it might be plumbed in the wrong sequence, in bypass, or starved of flow by an upstream clog. In areas with San Dimas hardness levels, you will notice pretty quickly when

the softener is not doing its job: soap will not lather, and spots return to fixtures in days.

Best system setups for San Dimas hard water

For homes in San Dimas, the best water filtration system for hard water usually is not a single device, but a layered approach that respects what each technology does best.

At a minimum, I often recommend a whole house softener for hardness control, plus separate drinking water filtration at the kitchen sink. In many homes, that is a reverse osmosis system.

When comparing options, it helps to see them side by side.

- Traditional salt based softener: Excellent for removing hardness minerals and protecting plumbing and appliances. Needs salt or potassium, regeneration, and drain connection. Not a contaminant filter by itself, so you often pair it with carbon or RO.
- Whole house carbon filter: Great for chlorine, many odors, and improving taste at every tap. Does not remove hardness. Media eventually exhausts and needs replacement or rebed.
- Under sink RO system: Provides very clean, low TDS water for drinking and cooking. Handles many contaminants. Does not soften the whole house and produces slower flow and some wastewater.
- Salt free conditioner: Helps reduce scale bonding on surfaces. Does not remove hardness or soften in the traditional sense. Performance varies strongly by brand and installation.
- Cartridge based under sink or faucet filter: Improves taste and removes chlorine and some contaminants at a single point. Inexpensive and simple, but limited capacity and no effect on hardness.

For most San Dimas families who ask, "What is the best water filtration system for hard water?" the honest practical answer is: a properly sized softener for the whole house paired with an under sink RO or high quality carbon system for drinking water, all correctly installed and maintained.

When your existing system needs troubleshooting

Sometimes you inherit a system with a house or forget how it was set up originally. In that case, start with a simple, structured diagnostic rather than random part swapping.

Here is a straightforward sequence many homeowners can follow before calling for help:

- Identify the system: locate model numbers, brand labels, and any manuals. Determine if you have filtration, softening, or both.
- Check bypass and valves: make sure the system is not in bypass, and all service valves are in their normal positions.
- Inspect for leaks and damage: look at housings, lines, and the surrounding area for moisture, cracks, or corrosion.
- Evaluate performance: test hardness before and after the system, check TDS for RO systems, and note any changes in pressure or taste.
- Document and decide: write down what you observe, then decide whether you are comfortable replacing filters and simple parts, or if it is time for a qualified technician.

If at any stage you find a hidden leak or unexplained electrical issues, stop and bring in [garbage disposal repair san dimas](#) a professional. Saving a service call is not worth the risk of hidden water or property damage.

Matching expectations, equipment, and San Dimas water

Hard water in San Dimas is not going away. The good news is that once you pair realistic expectations with the right type of system, it is very manageable.

The key points to hold onto are simple. Filtration and softening are not the same thing. Most taste and chlorine problems respond well to carbon and RO. Hardness and scale require softening or at least conditioning, especially at whole house scale. And every system, no matter how advanced, needs regular maintenance and thoughtful sizing.

When you understand why filtered water can still be hard, why your water filter keeps clogging or running slow, and how long reverse osmosis filters last in your conditions, you are in a much better position to decide whether to repair, upgrade, or replace what you have.

For San Dimas homeowners, the most reliable setup is rarely the cheapest gadget online, but a well matched combination of softening and filtration, chosen with local water in mind, and serviced on a sensible schedule. Once that is in place, the question, "Why is my water still hard after filtration?" finally disappears from the conversation.

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