

If you turn on your RO faucet in your San Dimas kitchen and get a trickle of water, or nothing at all, it is frustrating. Especially if you installed reverse osmosis to get away from bottled water and trust it for coffee, baby formula, and cooking.

When I get a call from a San Dimas homeowner saying, "My reverse osmosis system is not producing water," the pattern is very familiar. Most of the time it is not a catastrophic failure. It is a pressure, clogging, or valve problem somewhere in the chain. The good news: many issues are simple to understand, and several can be checked before you pay anyone to come out.

This guide walks through how a water filtration system works, what is unique about San Dimas water, why your RO may not be making water, and how to decide between repair and replacement.

A quick look at San Dimas water

Before you can troubleshoot a filtration system, it helps to know the water it is treating.

Most San Dimas homes receive water from local wells blended with imported water from the Metropolitan Water District, delivered through the Three Valleys Municipal Water District. Some neighborhoods are served directly by the City of San Dimas Water Division, others by Golden State Water Company. The details on your bill will tell you which.

In practice, for homeowners, a few points matter most:

San Dimas has hard water. Depending on the blend that month, hardness commonly ranges from about 8 to 18 grains per gallon (roughly 140 to 300 mg/L as calcium carbonate). That classifies as moderately hard to hard. Hardness scales up in pipes, on fixtures, and inside water heaters. It also loads up filters faster than softer water.

San Dimas tap water is regulated and generally considered safe to drink under state and federal standards. That said, many homeowners do not like the chlorine taste, the variability in mineral content, or the occasional odor. They also may want additional protection against PFAS, trace pharmaceuticals, and other emerging contaminants. That is why reverse osmosis systems, under sink filters, and whole house systems are so common in the area.

San Dimas water has chlorine or chloramine. These disinfectants protect against microbial growth in the distribution system, but they also drive many of the complaints about taste and smell. Those disinfectants affect filter life and choice of carbon media.

All of this shapes how your water filtration system works, how fast it clogs, and why it might stop producing water.

How a reverse osmosis system really works in your kitchen

A reverse osmosis drinking water system is a specific type of water filtration system. To understand why no water is coming out of your water filter, you need the basic flow in mind.

Most standard under sink RO systems in San Dimas follow this sequence:

1. A feed water valve taps into your cold water line. That valve needs to be open and supplying water at adequate pressure.
2. A prefilter stage, typically sediment then carbon, removes sand, rust, and chlorine. This protects the membrane.

3. The RO membrane uses pressure from your home's water supply to push water through a semi-permeable film. Clean water goes through, dissolved minerals and contaminants are rejected to the drain.
4. Purified water drips into a pressurized storage tank. That tank is what allows you to have a reasonable flow at the faucet, instead of a slow drip.
5. When you open the RO faucet, a tank valve opens and tank pressure pushes water through a final polishing filter and out to your glass.

If any part of this chain is blocked, out of adjustment, or failed, the entire system may slow down or stop. That is what you feel when your reverse osmosis system is not producing water.

Common choke points include: clogged prefilters, a fouled membrane, a bad automatic shutoff valve, a collapsed storage tank bladder, a closed or clogged feed valve, or low incoming water pressure from the home. The trick is to isolate which one.

Step by step: Why your reverse osmosis system is not producing water

When I am troubleshooting an RO in a San Dimas home, I follow a mental checklist. Below is a simplified version that you can use as a homeowner.

1. Check the obvious: feed valve, tank valve, and faucet

First thing: confirm water is even reaching the system. Under your sink you should see a small feed valve tapped into the cold water pipe. The handle should be in line with the tubing, indicating fully open. If someone recently did plumbing work, they may have partially closed it.

Next, look at the storage tank. At the top of the tank is a small valve with tubing going to the manifold. That valve also needs to be open. I have walked into more than one home where the tank valve was closed "temporarily" months earlier and everyone forgot.

At the faucet, feel the handle and base. If it feels loose or wobbly, the internal cartridge may be damaged, restricting flow. Try lifting the faucet handle with the storage tank isolated. If the tank is heavy, but nothing comes out, the faucet or line after the tank is blocked.

2. Is the storage tank full, empty, or dead?

Gently lift the RO storage tank. A full tank is heavy, often 20 to 30 pounds for a 3 to 4 gallon nominal tank. An empty tank feels surprisingly light.

If your RO system is not producing water but the tank is heavy and you get only a trickle at the faucet, the problem is more likely on the faucet side, the tank valve, or the internal bladder.

If the tank is empty and the system is quiet, the system is not making water at all. That points you back toward feed water, prefilters, membrane, or automatic shutoff valve.

A common silent failure is a ruptured tank bladder. Inside the metal tank is a rubber bladder that separates water from an air charge. That air side should hold about 7 to 8 psi when the tank is empty. If the bladder ruptures, the tank fills with water but cannot push it out effectively, leading to extremely slow flow and strange behavior such as water stopping midway through filling a pot.

3. Look at your prefilters: clogging in San Dimas

San Dimas hardness and occasional sediment loads can be tough on prefilters. If your system has not been serviced in a year or more, the prefilters are your prime suspects.

Old sediment filters plug up with a fine silt and scale. They look gray or brown, sometimes almost black. When a sediment filter plugs, you see low pressure into the membrane, so the RO system is slow or stops. Old carbon filters can also plug, especially if they are a fine powdered block style.

A rule of thumb for San Dimas homes using a standard under [septic pumping service san dimas](#) sink RO:

- Sediment and carbon prefilters often need replacement every 6 to 12 months.
- The RO membrane might last 3 to 5 years if you stay on top of prefilters and your water pressure is healthy.

If your water filtration system is slow, if the RO takes hours to refill after one pitcher, or if the system makes more noise than usual as it refills, dirty prefilters should be high on your list.

4. Water pressure: the hidden driver

Reverse osmosis depends on pressure. If you have less than about 40 psi going into the RO, production drops sharply. Below 30 psi, many residential systems will barely work at all.



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In older San Dimas neighborhoods, pressure varies. If your home is at a higher elevation in the service area, you may see lower pressure at the tap. If your pressure regulator is misadjusted, you may be limiting your own system.

If you ask, "How do I increase water pressure on my filtration system?" there are two answers: fix the house pressure first, then consider a booster pump if needed. Many under sink ROs in marginal pressure homes benefit greatly from a small booster pump that brings RO feed pressure into the 60 to 80 psi range.

If your RO suddenly stopped producing water after city work in the street or after a pressure regulator replacement, have the house pressure checked with a gauge at a hose bib and compare it with the RO manufacturer's minimum requirement.

5. The automatic shutoff valve and flow restrictor

Most modern ROs use an automatic shutoff valve that senses when the storage tank is full and stops production. If that valve fails, two opposite problems can occur.

In one scenario, the valve never opens. The system stays "off," the tank stays empty, and you wonder why no water is coming out of your water filter. In the other, the valve never closes and the system runs constantly, sending a continuous trickle to drain and sometimes overfilling or damaging the tank.

The flow restrictor, usually on the drain line, maintains the correct ratio between purified water and waste water. If the restrictor plugs, pressure rises on the drain side, starving production. If it falls out or fails open, water rushes to the drain and very little goes through the membrane.

For homeowners, these are usually not DIY parts to diagnose unless you are already comfortable with plumbing. A water treatment professional or plumber who repairs water filtration systems will typically check these components with a pressure gauge and by isolating lines.

Other common water filter problems that look similar

When you stand at a sink with no water from the filter faucet, it can be hard to separate issues. Here are a few that come up repeatedly in San Dimas homes.

Slow flow vs no flow

When homeowners say, "My water filtration system is slow," that is usually different from "no water at all." Slow flow is usually prefilters, pressure, or a weak tank. No flow, with an empty tank, points to feed or membrane side issues.

If the tank is full but flow at the faucet is slow, suspect a clogged post filter, a crushed line, or a failed faucet cartridge.

Filtered water tastes bad or is still hard

If your filtered water tastes bad, but the system is still producing a normal volume of water, that is usually a filter exhaustion rather than a production problem. Old carbon no longer removes chlorine effectively. The most common homeowner complaint is, "Why is my water filter not removing chlorine anymore?" followed by a description of a swimming pool taste. Carbon is a workhorse, but once the sites that adsorb chlorine are saturated, the filter is done.

If your water is still hard after filtration, it is important to be clear about what system you have. A standard RO under your sink will remove a large percentage of hardness in the drinking water line, but it does not soften the entire home. If you are expecting soft showers from an RO alone, you will be disappointed. For whole house scale control, you need a water softener or another hardness treatment system upstream.

A separate issue: a water softener not working properly when paired with a filter. If your water softener is not working with your filter, the problem may be in the softener's settings, salt bridging, or resin exhaustion, not necessarily the filter.

Cloudy or noisy filtered water

Cloudy filtered water often comes from tiny air bubbles after a recent filter change, or from a new tank air charge. Hold the glass up to the light. If the cloudiness clears from the bottom up in a minute or two, it is almost certainly air, not contamination.

If the water stays milky or you see particles, you may have a ruptured filter cartridge, especially in inexpensive housings. That is a sign to stop drinking from that system until it is inspected.

A water filter making noise, especially a rapid clicking or whistling when it runs, often indicates trapped air, a partially closed valve, or a vibration in the drain line. When noise appears at the same time as reduced production, it again points back toward pressure or restriction problems.

Leaks around the filter

"Why is my water filter leaking?" is one of the most urgent calls because leaks can damage cabinets and floors quickly. Typical leak sources are housing o-rings that were not lubricated or seated properly during a filter change, hairline cracks in housings from overtightening or freezing, or tubing connections that were not fully pushed into quick-connect fittings.

San Dimas rarely sees deep freezes, but mountain foothill nights can still dip low enough that uninsulated garage filters or exterior housings can freeze and crack in cold snaps. Yes, a water filter system can freeze and break, especially whole house systems mounted outdoors without freeze protection.

If you suspect a leak but cannot visually locate it, dry all visible surfaces, place paper towels under each connection, then pressurize the system and check for damp spots. That is a simple way to find a leak in a water filtration system without specialized tools.

Maintenance: filter replacement and servicing schedules

One of the most important questions I hear is, "How often should water filters be replaced?" The answer depends on water quality, usage, and filter size, but San Dimas homeowners can use some rough benchmarks.

For a typical under sink reverse osmosis system serving a family of 3 to 5:

- Sediment and carbon prefilters: every 6 to 12 months.
- RO membrane: every 3 to 5 years.
- Post carbon polishing filter: every 12 months.
- Storage tank air charge: check every couple of years when servicing the membrane.

If your water filtration system is serving a larger family that cooks at home frequently, or if you also feed a refrigerator or ice maker, lean toward the shorter end of those intervals.

For whole house sediment and carbon filters, the schedule is more variable. Some cartridge systems need changes every 3 to 6 months in San Dimas, especially where well water with more sediment is blended into the supply. Larger backwashing carbon systems may run several years before media replacement, but valves still need annual inspection.

"How often should a water filtration system be serviced?" is slightly different from "How often should filters be replaced?" At least once a year, it is wise to inspect all housings, check for leaks, sanitize the RO storage tank, test TDS (total dissolved solids) before and after the membrane, and verify water pressure. This is when a professional eye often spots small problems before they become no-water emergencies.

"How long do water filtration systems last?" Well built systems can run 10 to 15 years or more with proper maintenance. Plastic housings do age, valves wear out, and standards for contaminants evolve. There comes a point where replacement is more cost effective than continually nursing a very old unit.

Repair vs replacement: money, value, and judgment

Many homeowners ask two related questions:

- How much does it cost to repair a water filtration system?
- Is it cheaper to repair or replace a water filtration system?

For an under sink RO in San Dimas, basic service that includes sediment, carbon prefilters, and a post filter often runs in the low hundreds of dollars, parts and labor combined, depending on brand and access. Replacing an RO membrane might add another modest amount for the membrane itself and time to sanitize and recharge the system.

If you are only replacing cartridges yourself, then parts may run from 40 to 150 dollars a year depending on whether you use generic or OEM filters. A full new mid range RO system installed professionally might cost a few hundred to the lower thousand range, again depending on brand, tank size, and whether lines to a refrigerator or ice maker are added.

So, is it worth repairing a water filtration system? A few rules of thumb I use when advising clients:

If the system is under 8 to 10 years old and structurally sound, repair and upgrade components as needed. A new membrane and tank can give an older unit a second life.

If housings are cracking, parts are obsolete, or you have had multiple leaks from aging plastic, it is usually wiser to replace the entire unit for safety.

If the needed repair is more than half the cost of a new system and the existing system is already past a decade, most people are happier putting their money into current technology.

Whole house systems are a different scale. A full replacement can run from the upper hundreds into several thousand dollars depending on whether you are simply filtering sediment and chlorine or also softening and treating for specific contaminants. For those, bringing in a qualified water treatment specialist to test your water and discuss your goals is far more valuable than guessing from online prices.

DIY vs professional help

San Dimas has a lot of handy homeowners. Naturally, people ask:

Can I repair my water filtration system myself?

Can I change my water filter myself? Do I need a plumber for water filter repair?

The honest answer is: many cartridge changes and basic checks are very manageable DIY tasks, but full system diagnosis and some repairs are better left to pros.

If you are comfortable with plumbing and follow instructions carefully, you can generally:

- Shut off feed water and tank valves safely and depressurize the system.
- Remove and replace sediment and carbon cartridges, lubricate o-rings with food grade silicone, and avoid overtightening housings.

- Reset a straightforward system after a filter change by slowly repressurizing, flushing as directed, and checking for leaks.

You should be more cautious attempting:

Sanitizing and recharging a storage tank without clear instructions. Improper air charge leads to poor performance.

Diagnosing and replacing an RO membrane, automatic shutoff valve, or flow restrictor if you do not fully understand the tubing configuration. Misconnections here can damage the membrane or send waste water into your drinking line.

Working on whole house filters tied into main plumbing lines, especially if you lack the tools to handle seized unions, stuck filters, or frozen bypass valves.

When should you bring in a pro? If you have repeated leaks, mysterious noises, no water without an obvious cause, or if you need to cut pipes or adjust pressure regulators. Also, if you see signs of contamination such as mold in housings, slimy film, or persistent bad taste after new filters.

Who repairs water filtration systems in San Dimas? Both licensed plumbers and dedicated water treatment companies do. Look for someone who actually works with RO and filtration systems regularly, not just someone who “can probably figure it out.” Ask whether they carry parts for your system brand or at least compatible generic components.

Resetting and troubleshooting specific symptoms

Homeowners often focus on the symptom they notice. Here is how I think about a few common ones.

If no water is coming out of your water filter:

Check the tank weight, verify feed and tank valves are open, and see whether the system is making noise or sending water to drain. A silent system with an empty tank often has a feed water, pressure, or shutoff valve problem. A system that constantly sends water to the drain but never fills the tank has membrane, flow restrictor, or tank issues.

If your water filter keeps clogging:

San Dimas hardness and any fine sediment can overwhelm tiny cartridge filters fast. You may need a staged approach: a coarser sediment prefilter ahead of a finer one, or a larger capacity whole house sediment filter upstream. Sometimes the “most aggressive” filter is not the best match for your water; it simply plugs too quickly.

If your water filtration system is not working after a power outage:

Under sink RO systems without pumps usually do not care about power. Systems with booster pumps or UV lights may need to be reset using the manufacturer’s procedure. Resetting a water filtration system can be as simple as unplugging and replugging the controller, or as complex as entering a service mode. If you do not have the manual, check the model number online or call the installer.

If your water filter is not removing chlorine:

The issue is almost always exhausted carbon media, or an undersized carbon stage for your flow rate. San Dimas water is chlorinated, and the level can fluctuate. If chlorine breakthrough occurs, your nose and tongue will tell you quickly.

Choosing and upgrading systems for hard water

Many calls that start as “Why is my reverse osmosis system not producing water?” end with a broader conversation about the right system for the home. Sometimes the RO is struggling because it is being asked to do too much on its own in hard water conditions.

For San Dimas, where hardness and chlorine are givens, the best water filtration system for hard water usually pairs treatments:

A properly sized whole house sediment and carbon system first, to handle chlorine, odors, and particulate matter for all fixtures. Then either a water softener to handle hardness or a specialized scale control system if you wish to avoid traditional softening.

Under the sink, an RO system for drinking and cooking water, protected by the upstream treatments so its prefilters and membrane last longer.

This layering reduces the likelihood that your RO will keep clogging, makes your home more comfortable to live in, and simplifies maintenance. Yes, the upfront cost is higher, but over ten to fifteen years, many homeowners find it cheaper and easier to live with than repeatedly bandaging a single small RO that is doing all the heavy lifting.

When it is time to replace rather than repair

Eventually, every system reaches the tipping point. Signs of a bad water filtration system that is at the end of its useful life include repeated leaks from aging housings, brittle plastic fittings that crack during routine service, repeated clogs despite reasonable filter intervals, difficulty finding replacement parts, and an inability to meet your current water quality goals even with new cartridges.

When should you replace your water filtration system rather than patch it yet again? My advice is to look at its age, the total repair cost over the last few years, any water damage risks, and whether your expectations for water quality have changed.

If you installed a basic two stage under sink filter 15 years ago mainly to improve taste, and now you care about PFAS and emerging contaminants, it is reasonable to upgrade to a modern RO system with certified performance. Systems do not last forever, and neither do the standards by which we judge them.

A reverse osmosis system that is not producing water in your San Dimas home is annoying, but it is rarely mysterious. With a basic grasp of how the system works, a sense of local water conditions, and a structured way to check valves, filters, pressure, and the tank, you can often narrow the problem quickly. From there, you can make a clear choice between a simple fix, a professional repair, or a thoughtful replacement that better fits your water and your household for the next decade.

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