

Low water flow through a filter is one of those problems that sneaks up on you. One week your filtered water is filling a pot in seconds, the next week it dribbles out while you stand there wondering what changed.

In San Dimas, where tap water is hard and often treated with chlorine or chloramine, filtration systems work hard every day. That makes them especially prone to the very issue you are facing: slow, weak, or no flow at all.

This guide walks through how water filtration systems work, why they slow down, what is specific to San Dimas water, and how to decide whether to repair, upgrade, or replace your system. I will also call out where a handy homeowner can safely intervene, and where you really want a plumber or water treatment specialist involved.

First, a quick refresher: what is a water filtration system?

A water filtration system is any equipment that removes unwanted substances from your water before you drink it, cook with it, or send it to your fixtures and appliances. In San Dimas homes I typically see three categories:

Point of use filters under the sink or on the counter, such as carbon cartridge filters and reverse osmosis (RO) systems.

Whole house systems at or near where the water line enters the home, often a large filter housing or backwashing tank that treats every tap.

Water softeners that specifically target hardness minerals like calcium and magnesium. Softening is not exactly filtration in the traditional sense, but it works hand in hand with filters in hard water areas.

The details differ, but the basic idea is the same. Water passes through a medium that physically strains particles, chemically adsorbs contaminants, or exchanges ions to remove hardness. Anything that restricts this flow path ends up causing low pressure or slow water.

How does a water filtration system work, in plain terms?

Under the hood, most systems are surprisingly simple.

Cartridge filters use a replaceable element inside a plastic housing. As tap water passes through, sediment, rust, or chlorine stick to the filter media and cleaner water exits the other side. Over time that cartridge loads up with debris and starts to clog. That is one of the most common water filter problems leading to slow flow.

Granular carbon filters use loose carbon granules in a tank or cartridge. They are especially good at removing chlorine, many taste and odor compounds, and some organic chemicals. Too much sediment in front of them, or channeling inside the carbon, can change both flow rate and performance.

Reverse osmosis systems push water through a semi-permeable membrane. The membrane rejects dissolved solids, including a lot of what causes hardness and bad taste. Because water moves molecule by molecule, RO is inherently slower and more sensitive to pressure changes. When someone asks why their reverse osmosis system is not producing water, restriction at any stage of that process is usually to blame.

Water softeners use resin beads that trade sodium or potassium ions for hardness minerals. The resin periodically regenerates with a brine solution. When the softener or the plumbing around it is not sized or maintained well, it can cause a pressure drop that you notice at filtered taps.

In all these systems, water flow depends on three things: incoming pressure, unrestricted piping and valves, and reasonably clean filter media. When any one is off, your filtration system slows down.

What is in San Dimas tap water, and why does it matter?

To understand slow filtration in San Dimas, it helps to know what the water is like before it hits your system.

San Dimas receives water from local groundwater and imported surface supplies. Golden State Water Company and Covina Irrigating Company are major providers, and some properties connect through other municipal or mutual systems in the San Gabriel Valley. All of them must meet state and federal drinking water standards, so from a regulatory standpoint San Dimas water is considered safe to drink for the general population.

That said, homeowners commonly notice three things:

Hard water. Calcium and magnesium levels are typically in the “hard” to “very hard” range. On a hardness report you might see numbers around 150 to 300 milligrams per liter as calcium carbonate. This is why you see scale on fixtures and why many people install water softeners or specialized filters.

Chlorine or chloramine. Disinfectants are added to keep the water microbiologically safe. Sensitive drinkers notice this as a pool-like taste or odor. It is the main reason under-sink carbon filters are so popular.

Sediment and rust. Older galvanized service lines and some well sources can contribute fine particles. Even if they are within safe limits, they clog filters quickly.

That cocktail explains a lot of the local issues: why your water filter keeps clogging, why your filtered water tastes bad if the carbon is spent, and why your water is still hard after filtration if you only have a simple taste-and-odor filter rather than a softener or RO system.

Is San Dimas water safe to drink without a filter?

The short version: for most healthy adults, municipal San Dimas water that meets published quality reports is considered safe to drink. Providers are required to publish annual Consumer Confidence Reports showing test results for lead, copper, disinfection byproducts, and other regulated contaminants.

People still choose filtration for a few reasons:

Taste and smell. Chlorine, chloramine, and some naturally occurring compounds make tap water less pleasant.

Hardness. While not a health hazard, hard water is rough on plumbing, dishes, and skin.

Risk tolerance. Families with infants, pregnant women, immunocompromised members, or old plumbing may want extra protection, especially for lead and fine particles.

So the question is less “Is San Dimas water safe to drink?” and more “Does it meet my personal standards for taste, comfort, and peace of mind?” That is where point-of-use filters and whole house systems come in.

Why is my water filtration system slow?

When I get called to a house in San Dimas because the filtered faucet is taking forever to fill a glass, there are a handful of usual suspects. The specific failure varies by system type, but the pattern repeats.



Clogged cartridges are number one. If you are wondering why no water is coming out of your water filter at all, a completely plugged sediment or carbon cartridge is near the top of the list, especially if it has been more than six to twelve months since the last change, or even just a few months in areas with a lot of grit.

Scale buildup is a close second. Hard water does not just cause spots on glassware. It slowly shrinks the internal diameter of pipes, fittings, and even the tiny tubing on RO systems. On reverse osmosis systems, scale on the membrane surface dramatically reduces production, which is why your reverse osmosis system may not be producing water the way it used to.

Undersized plumbing or filters also play a role. I routinely see whole house filters marketed as “high flow” that are installed on homes with multiple bathrooms, irrigation, and large appliances. The housings, ports, or media simply cannot keep up when everything is running, so you see low water pressure after a water filter, especially at peak times.

Faulty valves, kinks, and installation mistakes are another culprit. A partially closed ball valve, a saddle valve feeding an RO unit, or a kinked flexible supply line can choke flow even if the filter itself is fine.

Finally, low city pressure or issues on the softener side show up as “my water filtration system is slow” even though the real issue is upstream. If a water softener not working correctly is restricting flow, your filter can only do so much.

Simple checks before you call for help

There are a few quick checks a homeowner in San Dimas can perform before calling a plumber or filtration specialist. These do not require special tools, and they often point you in the right direction.

1. Compare unfiltered and filtered flow at the same sink. If the cold tap blasts and the filtered faucet trickles, the issue lies in the filter system or its dedicated line, not in house pressure.
2. Look at the filter housing and tubing. Any obvious kinks, crushed hoses, or valves not fully open are low-hanging fruit. On ball valves, the handle should be in line with the pipe for "open".
3. Check the age of your filters. If you cannot remember the last time you changed cartridges, or it has been more than 6 months for a typical under-sink sediment or carbon filter, assume they are overdue.
4. Listen for your system. If your water filter is making a noise like hissing or chattering when flow is low, you may have air trapped, a partially closed valve, or a pressure-regulating part struggling.
5. Test a different fixture. If every tap in the house has gone weak at the same time, you might have a city supply issue, a failing pressure regulator, or a whole house filter problem, not just one under-sink unit.

If any of these checks point to the filtration equipment, you can decide whether to attempt a repair yourself or bring in a pro.

How often should water filters be replaced?

Filter life is one of the most misunderstood aspects of these systems. People hear "up to one year" in marketing material and assume that is a promise. In real San Dimas water, with hardness and sediment, the real replacement interval is often shorter.

Here are general ranges that match what I see:

Under-sink sediment or carbon cartridges. Every 6 months is typical for a family of 3 to 4, sometimes as often as every 3 months if the water is gritty or the usage high.

Refrigerator filters. About every 6 months or 200 to 300 gallons. Ignoring them is a common cause of slow flow through the fridge dispenser.

Reverse osmosis prefilters. Usually 6 to 12 months. These protect the RO membrane from sediment and chlorine.

RO membranes. Commonly 2 to 5 years, depending on incoming water quality and maintenance. That is how long a reverse osmosis filter (membrane) lasts in average conditions.

Whole house cartridge filters. Often 3 to 6 months, but it can be as short as a few weeks on a badly fouled supply, or as long as a year on a light sediment load with large housings.

Backwashing carbon tanks or media beds. Media can last several years, but flow problems may show up if the control valve fails or if the media is exhausted.

If you are asking "How do I know if my water filter is bad?" the signs are usually slow flow, change in taste or odor, cloudiness, or visible discoloration on the cartridge. If your filtered water tastes bad or looks off, take that as a prompt to inspect or replace.

When should a water filtration system be serviced?

Beyond swapping cartridges, a complete water filtration system should be serviced on a regular schedule. In my experience, an annual visit is a realistic minimum for most San Dimas systems that treat all drinking water or all household water.

A service visit typically covers:

Inspecting housings, valves, and tubing for leaks or stress.

Checking pressure before and after the system to identify restrictions.

Testing hardness, chlorine, and sometimes total dissolved solids (TDS) to verify performance.

Cleaning or sanitizing RO storage tanks and housings, which helps with cloudy or bad-tasting filtered water.

Verifying regeneration settings on water softeners and making sure brine tanks are working properly.

If you are wondering how often a water filtration system should be serviced, budget on once a year. Systems that serve commercial kitchens or large households might benefit from semiannual attention.

What causes cloudy filtered water, off tastes, or hard water after filtration?

Slow flow sometimes comes with side effects that scare people: water looks cloudy, tastes metallic, or still leaves spots.

Cloudy filtered water is often just microbubbles. This can happen after filter changes, major plumbing work, or when pressure shifts. Fill a clear glass and let it sit. If the cloudiness rises and clears from bottom to top in a minute or two, you are seeing air, not contamination. Persistent haze, especially with particles, is a different story and warrants filter inspection.

If your water is still hard after filtration, it may be because:

You have a simple carbon filter, not a softener or RO system, so hardness minerals are not being removed at all.

Your softener resin is exhausted or not regenerating correctly.

The filter or softener is bypassed. I have walked into plenty of homes where a previous tech left a bypass valve open.

When a customer asks why their water filter is not removing chlorine, the answer is often a similar mix: exhausted carbon, incorrect flow direction, or a bypass that was never reset.

Bad taste after a filter change is often due to a new carbon cartridge not being flushed enough. Most manufacturers call for several minutes of flow to rinse off fines and factory dust. If you skip that step, expect a grayish tinge or odd taste at first.

How do I fix whole house, under-sink, or RO low flow issues?

Each system type has its own failure modes.

For a whole house water filter, true low pressure everywhere in the home after the filter usually traces to a clogged cartridge, a failed backwashing valve, or an undersized system. To fix a whole house water filter, a pro will typically measure pressure before and after, isolate the filter in bypass, and see if the house pressure recovers. If it does, you know the restriction lives inside the filter housing or media bed.

For under-sink systems, slow output is almost always a fouled cartridge, a kinked line, or a poorly performing faucet. Changing the [septic pumping service san dimas](#) cartridge and gently straightening lines solves many of these without specialized tools.

Reverse osmosis low production is more technical. To repair a reverse osmosis system that is not producing water, a technician will check feed pressure, prefilters, the flow restrictor, storage tank air charge, and the membrane

itself. Even a simple thing like an RO tank that has lost its air charge can drastically cut your flow at the faucet, because the system has no pressure to push water out quickly.

Can I repair my water filtration system myself?

Many homeowners in San Dimas successfully handle basic filter changes and simple troubleshooting. You can usually change filter cartridges, reset a bypass valve, or clear a visible kink without risk, provided you are comfortable shutting off water and cleaning up a spill or two.

You should consider calling a plumber or water treatment specialist when:

You suspect a hidden leak and need to find a leak in your water filtration system behind walls, under a slab, or in a tight mechanical area.

You see persistent low pressure in the entire house and are not sure whether it is your filter, softener, or city supply.

You need to reset complex control heads on softeners or backwashing systems, or you want to know how to reset a water filtration system controller after a power failure.

You are dealing with a frozen or cracked filter housing. A water filter system can freeze and break during rare cold snaps in exposed garages or exterior installations, and that type of repair is not a simple cartridge change.

In short, can you repair your water filtration system yourself? Sometimes, yes. For anything beyond straightforward cartridge and faucet work, it is wise to involve someone who does this daily. A licensed plumber or certified water specialist knows not only how to fix an under-sink water filter, but also how to keep it from damaging your cabinets or flooring in the process.

How do I change a water filter cartridge, step by step?

Every manufacturer has variations, but most under-sink and whole house cartridge changes follow a similar pattern.

1. Shut off water to the filter and open a downstream faucet to relieve pressure. Without this step, you are fighting pressure when you try to unscrew the housing.
2. Use the filter wrench that came with the system to loosen the housing. Keep a towel or pan under it, because it will be full of water.
3. Remove the old cartridge, clean the housing with mild soap if needed, and inspect the O-ring. Lubricate the O-ring lightly with food-grade silicone and seat it properly.
4. Insert the new cartridge, taking care that it is aligned with any center posts, then screw the housing back on hand tight plus a slight snug with the wrench. Do not overtighten or you will struggle to remove it next time.
5. Turn water back on slowly and check for leaks while the housing fills. Run water for several minutes to flush air and any carbon fines before drinking.

If you are wondering how to remove a stuck water filter, patience and technique matter. Always relieve pressure first, use the correct wrench, and avoid aggressive prying that can crack the housing. If it refuses to budge, a pro may actually replace the housing rather than risk a catastrophic leak.

Why is my water filter leaking or making noise?

Leaks and odd sounds often accompany low flow problems. A slow drip at a housing can let air in, which then causes sputtering or hissing as water moves past gaps.

A water filter leaking at the threads or seam usually means:

An O-ring is dirty, nicked, or missing.

The housing is cross-threaded.

The system has been overtightened and the plastic is starting to deform.

If your water filter is making a noise like humming or whistling, you may have a pressure differential across a small orifice. On RO systems, the automatic shutoff valve and flow restrictor are common sources of noise when something is partially blocked.

Ignoring these signs is risky. A small leak today can become a cabinet-soaking failure tomorrow, especially on pressurized systems that run around the clock.

How much does a water filtration system cost, and what about repairs?

Costs vary by brand, size, and features, but there are realistic ranges for San Dimas homes.

A basic under-sink carbon system often runs a few hundred dollars installed, with replacement cartridges in the 30 to 80 dollar range each. Reverse osmosis systems with decent quality components typically land in the 500 to 1,000 dollar installed range, including a dedicated faucet and tank.

Whole house cartridge systems can cost 500 to 1,500 dollars installed, depending on flow rating and number of stages. Backwashing carbon tanks, softeners, or combination units are often in the 1,500 to 3,500 dollar range installed for a typical single family house, sometimes more for very large homes or high-end gear.

When people ask how much it costs to repair a water filtration system, it often breaks down like this:

Simple cartridge changes or minor leaks: usually a few hundred dollars or less, including parts and labor.

RO diagnostic and membrane replacement: often in the low to mid hundreds, depending on how many components need replacement.

Major re-piping, replacing cracked housings, or upgrading undersized systems: this can approach the cost of a new system if extensive work is required.

Whether it is cheaper to repair or replace a water filtration system depends on age and condition. If your system is more than 10 to 15 years old, with outdated spare parts and a history of problems, investing in a modern, properly sized system might be smarter. On a newer, reputable system, targeted repairs usually make sense.

Is it worth repairing a water filtration system, or should I replace it?

Here is how I approach that decision in the field.

I look at the age and brand first. Many systems last 10 to 20 years if treated gently, but plastic does not last forever. If housings and valves are brittle, I am more cautious about investing heavily in repairs.

Next I assess performance. If you are already unhappy with the taste or hardness, or you have outgrown a small system, a breakdown is often a good trigger to upgrade. For instance, if your water is still hard after filtration because you only have a taste-and-odor filter, a major leak might be the nudge you need to invest in a softener or RO.

Then I add up expected costs. A one-time repair that runs a few hundred dollars to restore a system that still meets your needs is usually worthwhile. If we are talking repeated service calls, hard-to-find parts, and limitations on flow, the math often favors replacement.

Finally, I factor in risk. Systems located above finished spaces, or those that have already leaked, carry more downside if they fail again.

In summary, it is worth repairing a water filtration system when it is relatively young, from a reputable manufacturer, and still sized appropriately. Replacement makes sense when the system is old, undersized, or fundamentally not aligned with your water quality goals.

How long do water filtration systems last?

With reasonable maintenance, most systems give many years of service.

Under-sink housings and faucets can last 10 or more years. The cartridges inside are the consumables.

Reverse osmosis systems often run well for 10 to 15 years. During that time you will replace prefilters regularly and the RO membrane a few times. Storage tanks can eventually lose their air charge or bladder and need replacement.

Whole house filters and softeners vary. A solid valve and tank assembly can last 15 to 20 years with periodic media changes. Cheaper big-box systems with plastic valves may need replacement sooner.

A good rule of thumb: when repair parts are harder to find than a new, modern system, you are approaching the “When should I replace my water filtration system?” threshold.

How do I increase water pressure on my filtration system?

Once you have addressed clogs, kinks, and faulty valves, you are left with design factors.

For under-sink systems, larger diameter tubing, less restrictive faucets, and properly sized cartridges help. Swapping a tiny quarter-inch line for a three-eighths-inch line can make a noticeable difference in flow.

For whole house systems, you want housings and valves that match or exceed the diameter of your main line. A 1 inch water main feeding through a ¾ inch filter with small internal ports will always struggle at peak demand.

In some cases, especially if your municipal pressure is low to begin with, a booster pump is the only real fix. On RO systems, a small booster pump often doubles production and reduces “Why is my reverse osmosis system not producing water?” complaints, because the membrane finally sees the pressure it needs.

The key is to distinguish between true low pressure from the city and pressure lost across your filtration equipment. A simple pressure gauge before and after the system tells that story clearly.

Choosing the best water filtration system for hard water in San Dimas

If you are starting from scratch or upgrading, think about what you are really trying to fix.

For taste and smell only, a carbon under-sink filter plus perhaps a fridge filter may be enough.

For hard water spots and scale, a properly sized ion-exchange softener is still the workhorse solution, often paired with carbon for chlorine control.

For those who dislike the taste and hardness and want an extra barrier for dissolved solids, a reverse osmosis system at the kitchen sink is hard to beat. Some homeowners pair RO for drinking with a whole house softener for scale control everywhere else.

There is no universal “best water filtration system for hard water,” but in San Dimas I frequently see a combination approach: softener plus carbon at the whole house level, and RO at the main drinking tap. When all three are installed and maintained correctly, slow flow complaints drop dramatically.

Low flow through a water filtration system is frustrating, but it is also a useful warning light. It tells you that something somewhere is clogged, mis-sized, or wearing out. In a city like San Dimas, with hard, chlorinated water, your filtration gear is doing real work every day. Give it the maintenance, sizing, and occasional professional attention it needs, and it will return the favor with clear, good-tasting water at a healthy flow rate.

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