

City of Watertown 2024 Annual Water Quality Report

Spanish (Español)

Este informe contiene informacion muy importante sobre la calidad de su agua beber. Traduscalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

Is my water safe?

We are pleased to present this year's Annual Water Quality Report (Consumer Confidence Report) as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). This report is designed to provide details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality. We are committed to providing you with information because informed customers are our best allies. Last year, we conducted tests for over 80 contaminants. We only detected 12 of those contaminants and found only 1 at a level higher than the EPA allows. As we informed you at the time, our water temporarily exceeded drinking water standards. (For more information see the section labeled Violations at the end of the report.)

Do I need to take special precautions?

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised people such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be at particular risk from infection or complication. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their healthcare providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Water Drinking Hotline (800-426-4791).

Where does my water come from?

In general, the sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals in some cases, radioactive material and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals and human activities. Contaminants that may be present in source water include - microbial contaminants; inorganic contaminants; pesticides, herbicides; organic, chemical, and radioactive contaminants. To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the State and the EPA prescribe regulations which limit the number of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The State Health Departments and the FDA's regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health. Our water source is the Black River, a

surface water source, which originates in the Adirondack Mountains and runs through the center of the City of Watertown and westerly to Black River Bay. During 2023 our system did not experience any restriction on our water source. Flows in the Black River are regulated by the Hudson-Black River Regulating District and are controlled by a series of hydroelectric power dams stretching from its headwaters in the Adirondacks to its mouth in Lake Ontario. If the City of Watertown's 15 million gallon per day Water Treatment Plant were running at full capacity, it would need only 2.3% of the minimum flow of the Black River.

Water is treated within modern facilities prior to distribution. The water filtration building and main pumping station were reconstructed in 1987-1991. Liquid Alum and a nonionic polymer are added to the water to coagulate and settle out dirt and organic matter through a dosing station upstream of the water plant. The settled water is then pumped to the process complex at 1707 Huntington Street. Polyaluminum chloride and nonionic or cationic polymer are added prior to filtering. Carbon may be added to combat taste and odor. The filtered water is disinfected with chlorine to kill bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms. The water is then treated with soda ash to increase alkalinity, sodium silicate for corrosion control and fluoride to help fight tooth decay. The finished potable water is pumped to the City's distribution system and through the Development Authority of the North Country's line to the Towns of Champion, LeRay, and Pamela.

During 2024 the City Water Treatment Plant produced **2,379,170,000** gallons of water. The amount of water that was metered by the City of Watertown was **1,525,048,000** gallons. The difference of 854,122,000 gallons or 35.9% was attributed to leaks, flushing and fires. Water Rates: Quarterly Meter Rate Usage Rate \$/1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons) First 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons) \$46.37 Over 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons) \$31.34 Monthly Meter Rate Usage Rate \$/1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons) First 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons) \$46.37 Over 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons) \$31.34

Source water assessment and its availability

The NYSDOH has evaluated this PWS (public water supply's) susceptibility to contamination under the Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), and their findings are summarized in the paragraph below. it is important to stress that these assessments were created using available information and only estimate the potential for source water contamination. Elevated susceptibility ratings do not mean that the source water contamination has or will occur for this PWS. This PWS provides treatment and regular monitoring to ensure the water delivered to the consumers meets all applicable standards.

Overall, this water supply is most susceptible to microbial contaminants, primarily from pasture and permitted discharge within the watershed. Sediment and turbidity associated with mining operation is also a concern, and transportation routes also have the potential to contribute various contaminants. A copy of the assessment can be obtained by contacting the supplier of water.

Why are there contaminants in my drinking water?

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least some small amounts of contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791). The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity: microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife; inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming; pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses; organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems; and radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities. To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the number of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

How can I get involved?

If you have any questions about this report or concerning your drinking water, please contact Aaron Harvill, Superintendent of Water, at (315) 785-7757. We want you to be informed about your drinking water. If you want to learn more, please attend any of our regularly scheduled City Council meetings. Significant items of agenda are normally printed on the City's website a few days prior to the meeting. The meetings are on the first and third Mondays of the month at 7:00 pm in the City Council chambers located on the third floor of City Hall, 245 Washington Street, Watertown, New York. Notices of Public Hearings are always printed in the newspaper and the City's website prior to the meeting.

Description of Water Treatment Process

Your water is treated by filtration and disinfection. Filtration removes particles suspended in the source water. Particles typically include clays and silts, natural organic matter, iron and manganese, and microorganisms. Your water is also treated by disinfection. Disinfection involves the addition of chlorine or other disinfectants to kill bacteria and other microorganisms

(viruses, cysts, etc.) that may be in the water. Disinfection is considered to be one of the major public health advances of the 20th century.

Water Conservation Tips

Did you know that the average U.S. household uses approximately 400 gallons of water per day or 100 gallons per person per day? Luckily, there are many low-cost and no-cost ways to conserve water. Small changes can make a big difference - try one today and soon it will become second nature.

- Take short showers - a 5-minute shower uses 4 to 5 gallons of water compared to up to 50 gallons for a bath.
- Shut off water while brushing your teeth, washing your hair and shaving and save up to 500 gallons a month.
- Use a water-efficient showerhead. They're inexpensive, easy to install, and can save you up to 750 gallons a month.
- Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Water plants only when necessary.
- Fix leaky toilets and faucets. Faucet washers are inexpensive and take only a few minutes to replace. To check your toilet for a leak, place a few drops of food coloring in the tank and wait. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it or replacing it with a new, more efficient model can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it and during the cooler parts of the day to reduce evaporation.
- Teach your kids about water conservation to ensure a future generation that uses water wisely. Make it a family effort to reduce next month's water bill!
- Visit www.epa.gov/watersense for more information.

Source Water Protection Tips

Protection of drinking water is everyone's responsibility. You can help protect your community's drinking water source in several ways:

- Eliminate excess use of lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides - they contain hazardous chemicals that can reach your drinking water source.
- Pick up after your pets.
- If you have your own septic system, properly maintain your system to reduce leaching to water sources or consider connecting to a public water system.

- Dispose of chemicals properly; for example, take used motor oil to a recycling center.
- Volunteer in your community. Find a watershed or wellhead protection organization in your community and volunteer to help. If there are no active groups, consider starting one. Use EPA's Adopt Your Watershed to locate groups in your community or visit the Watershed Information Network's How to Start a Watershed Team.
- Organize a storm drain stenciling project with your local government or water supplier. Stencil a message next to the street drain reminding people "Dump No Waste - Drains to River" or "Protect Your Water." Produce and distribute a flyer for households to remind residents that storm drains dump directly into your local water body.

Information on Fluoride Addition

Our system is one of the many drinking water systems in New York State that provides drinking water with a controlled, low level of fluoride for consumer dental health protection. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, fluoride is very effective in preventing cavities when present in drinking water at a properly controlled level. To ensure that the fluoride supplement in your water provides optimal dental protection, we monitor fluoride levels daily to make sure fluoride is maintained at a target level of 0.7 mg/l. During 2024 monitoring showed that fluoride levels in your water were within 0.2 mg/l of the target level for 93% of the time. None of the monitoring results showed fluoride at levels that approach the 2.2 mg/l MCL (maximum contaminate level) for fluoride.

Results of Cryptosporidium monitoring

Cryptosporidium is a microbial pathogen found in surface water throughout the U.S. Although filtration removes cryptosporidium, the most commonly used filtration methods cannot guarantee 100 percent removal. Our monitoring indicates the presence of these organisms in our source water and/or finished water. Current test methods do not allow us to determine if the organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease. Ingestion of cryptosporidium may cause cryptosporidiosis, an abdominal infection. Symptoms of infection include nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the disease within a few weeks. However, immuno-compromised people are at greater risk of developing life-threatening illnesses. We encourage immuno-compromised individuals to consult their doctor regarding appropriate precautions to take to avoid infection. Cryptosporidium must be ingested to cause disease, and it may spread through other means than drinking water.

Additional Information for Lead

The system inventory includes lead service lines.

The following link can be used to access inventory information - <https://www.watertown-ny.gov/departments/WaterDepartment/Isli>.

Water Quality Data Table

Contaminants	MCLG or MRDLG	MCL, TT, or MRDL	Detect In Your Water	Range		Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
				Low	High			
Disinfectants & Disinfection By-Products								
(There is convincing evidence that the addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants)								

Contaminants	MCLG or MRDLG	MCL, TT, or MRDL	Detect In Your Water	Range		Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source	
				Low	High				
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	NA	60	35	17.9	56.9	2024	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination	
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	NA	80	58.9	12.4	111.1	2024	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination	
Total Organic Carbon (% Removal)	NA	TT	NA	NA	NA	2024	No	Naturally present in the environment	
Inorganic Contaminants									
Barium (ppm)	2	2	.008	NA	NA	2022	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits	
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	1	.51	1	2024	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories The Treatment Plant has a set feed rate of .70 PPM. The Plant noted 27 readings or 7.4% of 365 readings that were .20 PPM over the plants set feed rate, and 0 readings that were .20 PPM under the plants set feed rate.	
Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen] (ppm)	10	10	.35	NA	NA	2024	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits	
Microbiological Contaminants									
Turbidity (NTU)	NA	0.3	100	NA	NA	2024	No	100% of the samples were below the TT value of .3. A value less than 95% constitutes a TT violation. The highest measurement was .17.	
100% of the samples were below the TT value of .3. A value less than 95% constitutes a TT violation. The highest single measurement was .17. Any measurement in excess of 1 is a violation unless otherwise approved by the state.									
Contaminants	MCLG	AL	Your Water	Range		# Samples Exceeding AL	Sample Date	Exceeds AL	Typical Source
				Low	High				
Inorganic Contaminants									
Copper - action level at consumer taps (ppm)	1.3	1.3	.27	NA	.56	0	2022	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead - action level at consumer taps (ppb)	0	15	1.8	NA	7.3	0	2022	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems;

Contaminants	MCLG	AL	Your Water	Range		# Samples Exceeding AL	Sample Date	Exceeds AL	Typical Source
				Low	High				
									Erosion of natural deposits

Violations and Exceedances

Unit Descriptions

Term	Definition
ppm	ppm: parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)
ppb	ppb: parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)
NTU	NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Units. Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.
NA	NA: not applicable
ND	ND: Not detected
NR	NR: Monitoring not required but recommended.

Important Drinking Water Definitions

Term	Definition
MCLG	MCLG: Maximum Contaminant Level Goal: The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
MCL	MCL: Maximum Contaminant Level: The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
TT	TT: Treatment Technique: A required process intended to reduce the level of contaminants in drinking water.
AL	AL: Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
Variances and Exemptions	Variances and Exemptions: State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.
MRDLG	MRDLG: Maximum residual disinfection level goal. The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
MRDL	MRDL: Maximum residual disinfectant level. The highest level of disinfectant is allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that the addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
MNR	MNR: Monitored Not Regulated
MPL	MPL: State Assigned Maximum Permissible Level

For more information please contact:

Contact Name: Chad Vieth

Address: City of Watertown, 1707 Huntington Street
WATERTOWN, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-7845