



Water testing performed in 2009

Presented By:

**CHELMSFORD
WATER DISTRICT**

PWS ID#: 3056000

Maintaining High Standards

Once again we are proud to present our annual water quality report. This report covers all testing performed between January 1, 2009, and December 31, 2009. The events of the past few years have presented many of us with challenges we could not have imagined. Yet in spite of this, we have maintained our high standards in an effort to continue delivering the best quality drinking water possible. There may be other hurdles in the future, but know that we will always stand behind you and the drinking water we work diligently to provide.

We encourage you to share your thoughts with us on the information contained in this report. Should you ever have any questions, we are always available to assist you.

Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants may be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The U.S. EPA/CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or www.epa.gov/safewater/hotline/.

Information on the Internet

The U.S. EPA Office of Water (www.epa.gov/watrhme) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) websites provide a substantial amount of information on many issues relating to water resources, water conservation, and public health. Also, the DEP has a website (www.mass.gov/dep) that provides complete and current information on water issues in Massachusetts, including valuable information about our watershed.

Community Participation

You are invited to participate in our public forum and voice your concerns about your drinking water. We meet the second Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Chelmsford Water District, 20 Watershed Lane, Chelmsford, MA.

What's Your Water Footprint?

You may have some understanding about your carbon footprint, but how much do you know about your water footprint? The water footprint of an individual, community, or business is defined as the total volume of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services that are consumed by the individual or community or produced by the business. For example, 11 gallons of water are needed to irrigate and wash the fruit in one half-gallon container of orange juice. Thirty-seven gallons of water are used to grow, produce, package, and ship the beans in that morning cup of coffee. Two hundred and sixty-four gallons of water are required to produce one quart of milk, and 4,200 gallons of water are required to produce two pounds of beef.

According to the U.S. EPA, the average American uses about 100 gallons of water daily. In fact, in the developed world, one flush of a toilet uses as much water as the average person in the developing world allocates for an entire day's cooking, washing, cleaning, and drinking. The annual American per capita water footprint is about 8,000 cubic feet; twice the global per capita average. With water use increasing six-fold in the past century, our demands for freshwater are rapidly outstripping what the planet can replenish.

To check out your own water footprint, go to www.h2oconserve.org, or visit www.waterfootprint.org to see how the water footprints of other nations compare.

Questions?

For more information about this report, or any questions relating to your drinking water, please contact us at (978) 256-2381 or visit our website at www.chelmsfordwater.com.



Where Does My Water Come From?

Chelmsford Water District customers are fortunate because we enjoy an abundant water supply from 19 sources. The Chelmsford Water District draws water from the Merrimack and Concord river basins. Our reservoirs hold one of the state's largest capacities: 15 million gallons of water. Combined, our facilities provide roughly 1.1 billion gallons of clean drinking water each year. The Riverneck Road Treatment Plant was placed in service at the end of 2004 and can treat up to 3 million gallons of water per day. The Crooked Spring Treatment Plant was placed in service in the spring of 2007 and can treat up to 4 million gallons a day. To learn more about our watershed, visit the U.S. EPA website at www.epa.gov/surf.

“WHEN THE WELL'S DRY, WE KNOW
THE WORTH OF WATER. – Benjamin Franklin”

Source Water Assessment

The Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) program assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies to potential contamination due to land uses and activity within the recharge areas. Established under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the program requires every state to inventory land uses within the recharge areas of all public water supply sources, to assess the susceptibility of drinking water sources to contamination from these land uses, and to publicize the results to provide support for improved protection.

WHAT IS MY SYSTEM'S RANKING?

A susceptibility ranking of high was assigned to this system using the information collected during the assessment by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

WHERE CAN I SEE THE SWAP REPORT?

The complete SWAP report is available at the Chelmsford Water District, at the Chelmsford Board of Health, and online at www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/3056000.pdf. For more information, call Superintendent Delaney at (978) 256-2931.

Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) prescribe regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

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. Substances that may be present in source water include:

Microbial Contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife;

Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or may 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 which may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems;

Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

How Is My Water Treated and Purified?

The Crooked Spring Treatment Plant went online in the spring of 2007. Nine of the District's wells are processed through this plant, including the four new gravel-packed wells at Meadowbrook #3 pumping station that went on line in November of 2007. The raw water goes through an aeration tower, removing any potential volatile organic compounds, then the water goes through a greensand filtration system, removing high levels of iron and manganese, before the water enters the distribution system. This plant discharges its backwash water to a lagoon system, which then re-charges the aquifer.

Raw water is drawn from the other eight wells in the eastern area of the District and is sent through the greensand filtration system at the Riverneck Road Treatment Plant to remove elevated levels of iron and manganese from these wells. In addition, the treatment plant treats the two wells on Canal Street that were out of service for many years because of poor water quality. The filtration process also incorporates an aeration tower to remove low levels of volatile organic compounds from the raw water. The backwash water generated from the treatment process is stored in an on-site 100,000-gallon underground storage facility. The facility has the capability of pumping all of the water to the nearby public sewer or recycling the water to the treatment plant.

All of Chelmsford Water District's water is now processed and treated through state-of-the-art treatment.

Faced with deteriorating water quality and increasing peak demands for water during daytime hours, the Board of Water Commissioners has made a commitment to our customers to provide treatment for all the District's wells.



Naturally Occurring Bacteria

The simple fact is, bacteria and other microorganisms inhabit our world. They can be found all around us: in our food; on our skin; in our bodies; and, in the air, soil, and water. Some are harmful to us and some are not. Coliform bacteria are common in the environment and are generally not harmful themselves. The presence of this bacterial form in drinking water is a concern because it indicates that the water may be contaminated with other organisms that can cause disease. Throughout the year, we tested many water samples for coliform bacteria. In that time, none of the samples came back positive for the bacteria. Federal regulations now require that public water that tests positive for coliform bacteria must be further analyzed for fecal coliform bacteria. Fecal coliform are present only in human and animal waste. Because these bacteria can cause illness, it is unacceptable for fecal coliform to be present in water at any concentration. Our tests indicate no fecal coliform is present in our water.

Water Conservation

You can play a role in conserving water and save yourself money in the process by becoming conscious of the amount of water your household is using and by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water. Here are a few tips:

Automatic dishwashers use 15 gallons for every cycle, regardless of how many dishes are loaded. So get a run for your money and load it to capacity.

Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

Check every faucet in your home for leaks. Just a slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons a day. Fix it and you can save almost 6,000 gallons per year.

Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Watch for a few minutes to see if the color shows up in the bowl. It is not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons a day from an invisible toilet leak. Fix it and you save more than 30,000 gallons a year.

Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Simply turn off all taps and water-using appliances. Then check the meter after 15 minutes. If it moved, you have a leak.

About Our Violation

During the year of 2009, the Chelmsford Water District was found to be in noncompliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental regulations that require public notification within the CCR.

In July of 2009, the Chelmsford Water District's (CWD's) Annual Statistical Report (ASR) was found to be deficient in one area of the report. Within the ASR, there are certain data portions that require specific reporting requirements. It was within these requirements that the CWD's ASR was found to be in noncompliance. This was solely a reporting oversight and was corrected immediately and that portion of the ASR was successfully resubmitted.

During the Sanitary Survey of 2009, the CWD was found to be in noncompliance in regards to the record keeping and documentation requirements of MA DEP. The reporting and documentation deficiencies were corrected. The District submitted specific written procedures and documentation changes on December 2009 which were accepted by MA DEP.

Lead and Drinking Water

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Chelmsford Water District is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Sampling Results

During the past year we have taken hundreds of water samples in order to determine the presence of any radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic, or synthetic organic contaminants. The table below shows only those contaminants that were detected in the water. The state allows us to monitor for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES							
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Haloacetic Acids [HAA] (ppb)	2009	60	NA	26.5	2.2–26.5	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2009	10	10	1.5	ND–1.5	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrite (ppm)	2009	1	1	0.15	ND–0.15	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	2009	80	NA	75	10–75	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community							
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2008	1.3	1.3	0.1	0/30	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2008	15	0	3	0/30	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES ¹							
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED		RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE		
Bromodichloromethane (ppb)	2009	10		ND–10	By-product of water disinfection		
Chlorodibromomethane (ppb)	2009	4		ND–4	By-product of water disinfection		
Chloroform (ppb)	2009	19		1–19	By-product of water disinfection		
Sodium (ppm)	2009	50		47–56	Naturally occurring		
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM EVALUATION ²							
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED		RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE		
Haloacetic Acids [HAA]–IDSE Results (ppb)				2009	23.8	1.2–23.8	By-product of drinking water disinfection
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes]–IDSE Results (ppb)				2009	66	3–66	By-product of drinking water disinfection

¹Unregulated contaminants are those for which the U.S. EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist the U.S. EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

²We were required by the U.S. EPA to conduct an evaluation of our distribution system. This is known as an Initial Distribution System Evaluation (IDSE) and is intended to identify locations in our distribution system that have elevated disinfection by-product concentrations. Disinfection by-products (e.g., HAAs and TTHMs) result from continuous disinfection of drinking water and form when disinfectants combine with organic matter that naturally occurs in the source water.

Definitions

90th Percentile: Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level.

AL (Action Level): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

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.

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.

MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level): The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant 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.

NA: Not applicable.

ND (Not detected): Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

ppb (parts per billion): One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

ppm (parts per million): One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).