

ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2023



Presented By
Town of Ashland

Our Commitment

We are pleased to present to you this year's annual water quality report. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2023. Included are details about your source of water, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies.

Our constant goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water and providing you with this information because informed customers are our best allies.

Source Water Assessment

A Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) is now available at our office. This plan is an assessment of the delineated area around our listed sources through which contaminants, if present, could migrate and reach our source water. It also includes an inventory of potential sources of contamination within the delineated area and a determination of the water supply's susceptibility to contamination by the identified potential sources.

According to the SWAP, our water system had a susceptibility rating of moderate. If you would like to review the SWAP, please feel free to contact our office during regular office hours or visit <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ashland-water-sewer-dept-swap-report/download>.



Water Treatment Process

The treatment process consists of a series of steps. First, raw water is drawn from our water source and sent to an aeration tank, which allows for oxidation of iron, manganese, and color by ozone. The water then goes to a mixing tank, where polyaluminum chloride (as a flocculant) and sodium hydroxide (as a pH adjuster) are added. The addition of these substances causes the formation of small particles; un-settable solids (called floc) then adhere to one another, transitioning to settable solids, which are removed through a filter train. The filter train consists of a layer of granular activated carbon and silicate sand.

Chlorine and ammonia sulfate are added to create chloramines, a long-lasting disinfectant, to eliminate any bacteria that may still be present. (We carefully and continuously monitor the amount of monochloramines necessary to protect the safety of your water without compromising taste.) Finally, sodium hydroxide (to adjust the final pH and alkalinity) and a corrosion inhibitor, zinc orthophosphate (to protect distribution system pipes), are added before the water is pumped to water towers and your home or business.

“When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.”

—Benjamin Franklin

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. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 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 <http://water.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.



About Our Violation

The Town of Ashland did not provide notice of individual results from lead and copper tap water monitoring to persons served by the system at each sampling site from which a sample was taken, as required by 310 CMR 22.06B(6)(c), within 30 days of receiving the results from the laboratory.

Public Meetings

The Ashland Board of Selectmen meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. For more information, visit our office at 20 Ponderosa Road, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or www.ashlandmass.com.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Daniel Maurer at the Ashland Department of Public Works, (508) 532-7954, or email dmaurer@ashlandmass.com.

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. EPA prescribe regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The 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.

Where Does My Water Come From?

The Ashland Water Department uses groundwater supplied from five wells drawing from an aquifer. This source accounts for 100 percent of our total water supply. During severe drought conditions, the town may draw from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) through the Southboro Interconnect.

Whatever activities are allowed in the watershed could adversely affect our water supply. As concerned citizens, we should work together to preserve the land within the watershed and continue to protect our water source and the surrounding area from all types of pollution.



— BY THE NUMBERS —



5.1
TRILLION

The dollar value needed to keep water, wastewater, and stormwater systems in good repair.



12
THOUSAND

The average amount in gallons of water used to produce one megawatt-hour of electricity.



2

How often in minutes a water main breaks.



47.5
TRILLION

The amount in gallons of water used to meet U.S. electric power needs in 2020.

Lead in Home Plumbing

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. We are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but we 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 two 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.





What's a Cross-Connection?

Cross-connections that contaminate drinking water distribution lines are a major concern. A cross-connection is formed at any point where a drinking water line connects to equipment (boilers), systems containing chemicals (air conditioning systems, fire sprinkler systems, irrigation systems), or water sources of questionable quality. Cross-connection contamination can occur when the pressure in the equipment or system is greater than the pressure inside the drinking water line (backpressure). Contamination can also occur when the pressure in the drinking water line drops due to fairly routine occurrences (main breaks, heavy water demand), causing contaminants to be sucked out from the equipment and into the drinking water line (backsiphonage).

Outside water taps and garden hoses tend to be the most common sources of cross-connection contamination at home. The garden hose creates a hazard when submerged in a swimming pool or attached to a chemical sprayer for weed killing. Garden hoses that are left lying on the ground may be contaminated by fertilizers, cesspools, or garden chemicals. Improperly installed valves in your toilet could also be a source of cross-connection contamination.

Community water supplies are continuously jeopardized by cross-connections unless appropriate valves, known as backflow prevention devices, are installed and maintained. We have surveyed industrial, commercial, and institutional facilities in the service area to make sure that potential cross-connections are identified and eliminated or protected by a backflow preventer. We also inspect and test backflow preventers to make sure that they provide maximum protection. For more information on backflow prevention, contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Table Talk

Get the most out of the Testing Results data table with this simple suggestion. In less than a minute, you will know all there is to know about your water:

For each substance listed, compare the value in the Amount Detected column against the value in the MCL (or AL, SMCL) column. If the Amount Detected value is smaller, your water meets the health and safety standards set for the substance.

Other Table Information Worth Noting

Verify that there were no violations of the state and/or federal standards in the Violation column. If there was a violation, you will see a detailed description of the event in this report.

If there is an ND or a less-than symbol (<), that means that the substance was not detected (i.e., below the detectable limits of the testing equipment).

The Range column displays the lowest and highest sample readings. If there is an NA showing, that means only a single sample was taken to test for the substance (assuming there is a reported value in the Amount Detected column).

If there is sufficient evidence to indicate from where the substance originates, it will be listed under Typical Source.

Definitions

90th %ile: Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level. This number is compared to the Action Level to determine lead and copper compliance.

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.

pCi/L pCi/L (picocuries per liter): A measure of radioactivity.

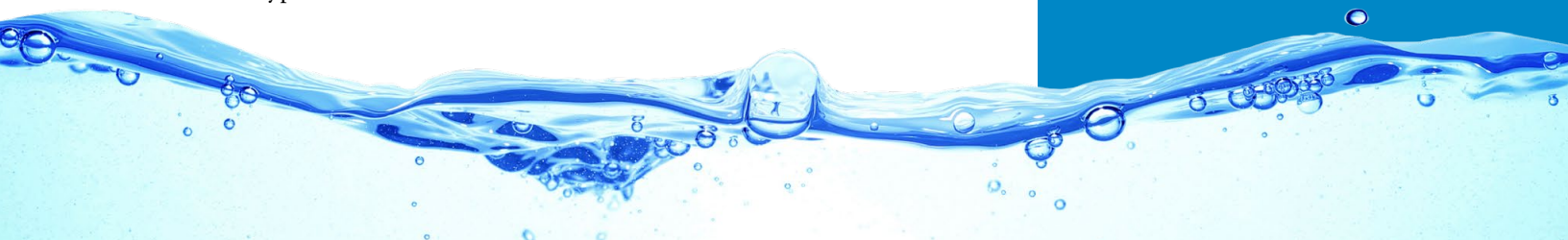
ppb (parts per billion): One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

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

ppt (parts per trillion): One part substance per trillion parts water (or nanograms per liter).

SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level): These standards are developed to protect aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

TT (Treatment Technique): A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.



Test Results

Our water is monitored for many different kinds of substances on a very strict sampling schedule, and the water we deliver must meet specific health standards. Here, we only show those substances that were detected in our water (a complete list of all our analytical results is available upon request). Remember that detecting a substance does not mean the water is unsafe to drink; our goal is to keep all detects below their respective maximum allowed levels.

The state recommends monitoring 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.

We participated in the fifth stage of the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR5) program by performing additional tests on our drinking water. UCMR5 sampling benefits the environment and public health by providing the U.S. EPA with data on the occurrence of contaminants suspected to be in drinking water to determine if it needs to introduce new regulatory standards to improve drinking water quality. Unregulated contaminant monitoring data are available to the public, so please feel free to contact us if you are interested in obtaining that information. If you would like more information on the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, please call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Bromate (ppb)	2023	10	0	0.1	ND–0.0013	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Chloramines (ppm)	2023	[4]	[4]	1.12	0.01–2.54	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids [HAAs]–Stage 2 (ppb)	2023	60	NA	20	5.8–45	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2023	10	10	0.06	0.01–0.09	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
PFAS6 (ppt)	2023	20	NA	4.47	ND–8.41	No	Discharges and emissions from industrial and manufacturing sources associated with the production or use of moisture- and oil-resistant coatings on fabrics and other materials; Use and disposal of products containing these PFAS, such as firefighting foams
Tetrachloroethylene (ppb)	2023	5	0	0.19	ND–0.72	No	Discharge from factories and dry cleaners
Total Coliform Bacteria (positive samples)	2023	TT	NA	0	NA	No	Naturally present in the environment
TTHMs [total trihalomethanes]–Stage 2 (ppb)	2023	80	NA	38	18–67	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Gross Alpha (pCi/L)	2023	15	0	0.463	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Combined Radium 226 and 228 (pCi/L)	2023	5	0	0.676	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits

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 %ILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2023	1.3	1.3	0.303	0/32	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2023	15	0	0.0047	0/32	No	Lead service lines; Corrosion of household plumbing systems, including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits

SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Color (units)	2023	15	NA	3.06	ND–14	No	Naturally occurring organic materials
Hardness (CaCO ₃) (ppm)	2023	NA	NA	44.1	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits
Iron (ppb)	2023	300	NA	40	ND–90	No	Leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
Manganese (ppb)	2023	50	NA	20	ND–30	No	Leaching from natural deposits
pH (units)	2023	6.5–8.5	NA	7.53	7.29–7.84	No	Naturally occurring
Sodium (ppm)	2023	20	NA	74.6	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits