



The Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority
441 Smithfield Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15222
www.pgh2o.com

Publication of PWSA's 2004 Annual Drinking Water Quality
Report is a requirement of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

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2004 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report PA Public Water Supply ID No. 5020038

This report gives information on our water quality and explains what it means.

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien. (This report contains important information about your drinking water. Translate it, or speak with someone who understands it.)

Special Information for Immuno-compromised Individuals

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised 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 can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care 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 Drinking Water Hotline at (800-426-4791).

2004 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

We're pleased to present to you The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority's (PWSA) 2004 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report. This report is designed to inform you about the quality water and quality services we deliver to you every day. Our constant goal is to provide you with a dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and to protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Dr. Stanley States, Water Quality Manager of PWSA at (412) 782-7553. We want our valued customers to be informed about their water.

This water quality report and additional information about PWSA are available on our website at www.pgh2o.com. Additional copies may be obtained by calling our Communications Division at (412) 255-0767.

To learn more about PWSA, please attend our regularly scheduled board meetings. They are held on the second Friday of every month at 9:00 a.m. in our downtown office at:

The Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority (PWSA)
441 Smithfield Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 255-8935 • Fax: (412) 255-2475 • www.pgh2o.com

Where does your water come from and how is it treated?

PWSA draws its water from the Allegheny River. No ground or well water is used. Approximately 70 million gallons of water are treated each day at our water treatment plant. The plant is capable of producing over 100 million gallons per day. The treatment process takes three full days and consists of three separate stages:

Stage 1 – Clarification - River water passes through a process called “clarification,” in which silts and clays are removed. This stage involves chemical formation of clumped particles called “floc” which are then physically removed by gravity sedimentation.

Stage 2 – Filtration - The clarified water next passes slowly through sand and gravel filters in order to remove fine particles and microorganisms.

Stage 3 – Disinfection - The filtered water is finally treated with chlorine in order to ensure removal of any harmful microorganisms.

During the process, several chemicals are added to complete treatment. These include activated carbon, which sweetens the taste of the water, and fluoride to prevent cavities in children’s teeth.

Source Water Protection

PWSA has worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) in preparing a Source Water Assessment Report for our source water, the Allegheny River. The report identifies the most likely sources of pollution affecting this river. These include accidental release of contaminants from industrial processes and terminals; cumulative impact of discharge from power plants; cumulative release of petroleum products from pipeline ruptures; stormwater, and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) runoff from lands adjacent to the river. A summary of the Source Water Assessment is available on the PADEP website at www.dep.state.pa.us.

Who monitors and ensures the quality of water?

PWSA monitors for constituents in your drinking water (on a continuous basis - 365 days per year) in keeping with federal and state regulations. Table #1 (which appears on pages 4 & 5) shows the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004.

What does the test result information mean?

As you can see in Table 1, our system had no violations. We are proud that your drinking water meets or exceeds all federal and state requirements. We have learned through our monitoring and testing that some constituents have been detected.

Should you be concerned about lead?

Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. Always use cold water for cooking, drinking and making baby formula.

It is possible that the lead levels in your home may be higher than other homes in the community as a result of the materials used in your home’s plumbing. It is important to point out that the use of lead solders or pipes in drinking water plumbing systems is illegal. Never use lead solders when repairing drinking water lines.

If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home’s water and would like to have your water tested for lead, free of charge, please call PWSA at (412) 782-7554. Additional information is available from the EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline.

In General

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some 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 EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline.

Prepared by:

*The Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority,
in keeping with its vision to provide water and
wastewater services that meet or exceed
regulations and customer expectations at the
lowest possible cost.*

Abbreviations and Definitions

In the Water Quality Table you will find many terms and abbreviations you might not be familiar with. To help you better understand these terms, we have provided the following definitions:

- ND:** *Non-Detect* - Laboratory analysis indicates that the contaminant is not present at a detectable level.
- ppm or mg/l:** *Parts Per Million or Milligrams Per Liter*
- ppb or ug/l:** *Parts Per Billion or Micrograms Per Liter*
- NTU:** *Nephelometric Turbidity Unit* - Measurement of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.
- AL:** *Action Level* - The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- TT:** *Treatment Technique* - A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
- 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:** *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.
- MRDLG:** *Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal* - The level of 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 contamination.
- 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.
- NA:** *Non-Applicable* - Does not apply.
- pCi/L:** *Picocuries Per Liter* - A measure of radioactivity in water.
- mrem/yr:** *Millirems Per Year* - A measure of radiation absorbed by the body.

While we have conducted more than 100,000 analyses for approximately 100 different chemical and microbial constituents last year, we only found detectable levels of the regulated contaminants listed in the water quality table. It should be noted that none of the test results exceeded federal or state maximum contaminant levels (MCLs).

Drinking Water Contaminants

In general, the sources of all drinking water (both tap 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. Water can also absorb or dissolve substances resulting from the presence of animal or human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source or raw water include:

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

Inorganic chemical 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.

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

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) prescribes regulations which limit the amount 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.

PWSA tests for contaminants that may be present in the source water prior to treatment. Results of the tests enable us to adjust the treatment process in order to maximize the reduction and removal of contaminants. Tests are also conducted during the treatment process and on the finished or treated water. Additional samples for testing are collected from storage facilities, various points in the distribution network, and customers' taps.

2004 Water Quality Table Table #1: Test results for regulated contaminants

	Contaminant (Unit of measurement)	Violation Y/N	Level Detected	Range	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Microbiological Contaminants	TURBIDITY (a)	N	0.14 NTU (b) 100%	N/A N/A	N/A	TT=1 NTU TT=% of samples <0.3 NTU	Soil runoff
	TOTAL CHLORINE RESIDUAL IN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (ppm)	N	1.2	<0.02 to 1.2	(c) 4	(d) 4	Water additive used to control microbes
	FREE CHLORINE RESIDUAL AT ENTRY POINT TO DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (ppm)	N	0.53	0.53 to 1.85	(c) 4	(d) 4	Water additive used to control microbes
Disinfection By-products	TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES (ppb)	N	65	26 to 112	N/A	80	By-product of drinking water chlorination
	TOTAL HALOACETIC ACIDS (ppb)	N	21	8 to 39	N/A	60	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Radioactive Contaminants	BETA PHOTON EMITTERS (pCi/L) (e)	N	2.19	(f)	0	(g) 50	Decay of natural and man-made products
Lead and Copper Rule	LEAD (ppb)	N	90th percentile =9.5	1 site above AL out of 50 sites sampled	0	AL = 15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits
	COPPER (ppm)	N	90th percentile =0.099	No sites above AL out of 50 sites sampled	1.3	AL = 1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives
Inorganic Chemical Contaminants	BARIUM (ppm)	N	0.041	(f)	2	2	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
	CHROMIUM (ppb)	N	2.9	(f)	100	100	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; erosion of natural deposits
	FLUORIDE (ppm)	N	1.1	(f)	2	2	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
	NITRATE (ppm)	N	0.53	(f)	10	10	Runoff from fertilizers; leaching from sewage; natural deposits
	NICKEL (ppb)	N	10	(f)	100	100	Discharges from petroleum and metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits; discharge from mines
Total Organic Carbon Removal	TOTAL ORGANIC CARBON (TOC) (% REMOVAL) (h)	N	No quarters out of compliance	21-50	N/A	TT = 35%	Naturally present in the environment
Footnotes: (a) 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. (b) All turbidity samples met the turbidity limit of 0.3 NTU. (c) MRDLG (d) MRDL (e) Data from year 2003. The state allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old. (f) Only one sample required. (g) USEPA considers 50 pCi/L to be the level of concern for beta particles. (h) Adequate removal of TOC may be necessary to control unwanted formation of disinfection by-products.							