

2008 Annual Water Supply Report

Western Berks Water Authority

PWSID #3060066

Spanish (Español)

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

Is my water safe?

Last year, we conducted tests for many contaminants. We detected those contaminants shown in this report, none of which exceeded the MCL. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. We are committed to providing you with this information because informed customers are our best allies.

Do I need to take special precautions?

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. Environmental Protection Agency(EPA) and the 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?

The Western Berks Water Authority draws its water from an intake located along the Tulpehocken Creek downstream of Blue Marsh Dam. Our watershed comprises approximately 175 square miles of agricultural, wooded and suburban areas. The watershed extends north to the southern slope of the Blue Mountains beyond Strausstown and Shartlesville and west to the Myerstown area.

Source water assessment and its availability

In 2002, the Philadelphia Water Department, working under contract for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, completed a Source Water Assessment for the Western Berks Water Authority. The assessment evaluated potential contaminant threats to the raw water source used by the Authority and the susceptibility of the source to these threats. The following were identified as the top three concerns:

- 1) Nitrate and pesticide contamination from agricultural runoff
- 2) Bacterial and chemical contamination from discharges of sewage treatment plants and industrial sources
- 3) Contamination from roadway accidents and urban runoff

The Western Berks Water Authority is concerned about protecting its water source. Current treatment processes ensure that raw water taken from the Tulpehocken Creek becomes finished water that meets all Federal and State drinking water standards. A copy of the Source Water Assessment Report is available for review by contacting our office at 610-678-4400.

Why are there contaminants in my drinking water?

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 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. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that 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.

How can I get involved?

The Western Berks Water Authority board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month unless rescheduled due to holidays or other conflict. Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the water treatment plant located at 91 Water Road, Lower Heidelberg Township. Please telephone 610-678-4400 if additional information is required.

Monitoring and reporting of compliance data violations

The Western Berks Water Authority failed to collect one TTHM/HAA5 quarterly sample for the second quarter of 2008. Steps have been taken to ensure the sampling and reporting of these tests on a timely basis. The required Public Notification for this violation is contained on the last page of this Annual Water Supply Report.

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 illness. 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 be spread through means other than drinking water.

Cryptosporidium was not detected in the raw water samples taken monthly from April through December.

Additional Information for Nitrate

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant, you should ask for advice from your health care provider.

Water Quality Data Table

The table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the calendar year of this report. The presence of contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done in the calendar year of the report. The EPA or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently.

<u>Contaminants</u>	<u>MCLG or MRDLG</u>	<u>MCL, TT, or MRDL</u>	<u>Your Water</u>	<u>Range</u>		<u>Sample Date</u>	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Typical Source</u>
				<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>			
Disinfectants & Disinfection By-Products								
(There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.)								
Chloramine (as Cl ₂) (mg/L)	4	4	2.68	2.08	2.68	2008	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	NA	60	59	0.0	59	2008	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Total Organic Carbon	NA	TT	2.4	0.7	1.4	2008	No	Naturally present in the environment.
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	NA	80	39.8	10.4	39.8	2008	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Inorganic Contaminants								

Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.9	NA	8/2008	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories	
Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen] (ppm)	10	10	5.59	2.17	5.59	2008	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (optional) (ppm)		MPL					No	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching

Microbiological Contaminants

Total Coliform (% positive samples/month)	0	5	2	NA	2008	No	Naturally present in the environment
Turbidity (NTU)	100% of the samples were below the TT value of 0.3. A value less than 95% constitutes a TT violation.				2008	No	Soil runoff

The highest single measurement was 0.25 Any measurement in excess of 1 is a violation unless otherwise approved by the state.

Unit Descriptions

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
mg/L	mg/L: Number of milligrams of substance in one liter of water
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.
% positive samples/month	% positive samples/month: Percent of samples taken monthly that were positive
NA	NA: not applicable
ND	ND: Not detected
NR	NR: Monitoring not required, but recommended.

Important Drinking Water Definitions

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
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 a contaminant 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 a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that 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:

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

ESTE INFORME CONTIENE INFORMACION MUY IMPORTANTE SOBRE SU AGUA DE BEBER. TRADUZCALO O HABLE CON ALGUIEN QUE LO ENTIENDA BIEN.

Monitoring Requirements Not Met for Western Berks Water Authority

Our water system violated drinking water standards over the past year. Even though this was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did to correct this situation.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. During 2008 we did not complete all monitoring for TTHM/HAA5 and therefore cannot be sure of the quality of our drinking water during that time.

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do at this time.

What does this mean?

We are required to collect one TTHM/HAA5 sample quarterly. We failed to conduct this sampling as required for the second quarter 2008.

What Happened? What was done?

The sample was inadvertently missed. A program has been put into place ensure this does not happen in the future.

For more information, please contact Chip Bilger at 610-678-4400

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by: Western Berks Water Authority.

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