

ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

REPORTING YEAR 2020



Presented By
Natick Water Division



Our Mission Continues

Once again, we are pleased to present our annual water quality report covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2020. As in years past, we are always striving to deliver water that meets all state and federal drinking water standards. To that end, we remain vigilant in meeting the challenges of new and changing regulations, source water protection, water conservation, and community outreach and education, while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you and your family.

We encourage you to share your thoughts with us on the information contained in this report. After all, well-informed customers are our best allies.

Water Main Flushing

Distribution mains (pipes) convey water to homes, businesses, and hydrants in your neighborhood. The water entering distribution mains is of very high quality; however, water quality can deteriorate in areas of the distribution mains over time. Water main flushing is the process of cleaning the interior of water distribution mains by sending a rapid flow of water through the mains.

Flushing maintains water quality in several ways. For example, flushing removes sediments like iron and manganese. Although iron and manganese do not pose health concerns, they can affect the taste, clarity, and color of the water. Additionally, sediments can shield microorganisms from the disinfecting power of chlorine, contributing to the growth of microorganisms within distribution mains. Flushing helps remove stale water and ensures the presence of fresh water with sufficient dissolved oxygen, disinfectant levels, and an acceptable taste and smell.

During flushing operations in your neighborhood, some short-term deterioration of water quality, though uncommon, is possible. You should avoid tap water for household uses at that time. If you do use the tap, allow your cold water to run for a few minutes at full velocity before use and avoid using hot water, to prevent sediment accumulation in your hot water tank.

Please contact us if you have any questions or if you would like more information on our water main flushing schedule.

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 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.

Where Does My Water Come From?

The Town of Natick obtains its drinking water from eleven groundwater wells, at five locations. Nine of the wells are located in Natick and are known as the Springvale, Evergreen, Pine Oaks and Morse Pond wells. The Elm Bank wells are located in Dover, Massachusetts. The Morses Pond and Pine Oaks wells serve as backup wells and are used to supplement water supplies during high demand conditions.

These eleven wells pump water into five treatment plants, known as Springvale Tonka (which also treats the Evergreen Wells), Springvale H&T, Elm Bank, Pine Oaks, and Morses Pond. Each treatment plant pumps the treated water into one distribution system. The water distribution system consists of approximately 196 miles of water mains and two water storage facilities that have a combined capacity of 9 million gallons.

To find more information about drinking water on the Internet, go to the U.S. EPA's Web site at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/>

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 <http://water.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.



QUESTIONS? For more information about this report, or for any questions related to your drinking water, please contact the Natick Water/Sewer Division at (508) 647-6557 or email at water@natickma.org.

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) prescribes 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 storm-water 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 storm-water 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 storm-water 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.

The Benefits of Fluoridation

Fluoride is a naturally occurring element in many water supplies in trace amounts. In our system, the fluoride level is adjusted to an optimal level averaging 0.7 parts per million (ppm) to improve oral health in children. At this level, it is safe, odorless, colorless, and tasteless. There are over 3.9 million people in 140 Massachusetts water systems and 184 million people in the U.S. who receive the health and economic benefits of fluoridation.

FOG (fats, oils, and grease)

You may not be aware of it, but every time you pour fat, oil, or grease (FOG) down your sink (e.g., bacon grease), you are contributing to a costly problem in the sewer collection system. FOG coats the inner walls of the plumbing in your house as well as the walls of underground piping throughout the community. Over time, these greasy materials build up and form blockages in pipes, which can lead to wastewater backing up into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains. These backups allow FOG to contaminate local waters, including drinking water. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public health hazard. FOG discharged into septic systems and drain fields can also cause malfunctions, resulting in more frequent tank pump-outs and other expenses.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year to unplug or replace grease-blocked pipes, repair pump stations, and clean up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Here are

some tips that you and your family can follow to help maintain a well-run system now and in the future:

NEVER:

- Pour fats, oil, or grease down the house or storm drains.
- Dispose of food scraps by flushing them.
- Use the toilet as a waste basket.

ALWAYS:

- Scrape and collect fat, oil, and grease into a waste container such as an empty coffee can, and dispose of it with your garbage.
- Place food scraps in waste containers or garbage bags for disposal with solid wastes.
- Place a wastebasket in each bathroom for solid wastes like disposable diapers, creams and lotions, and personal hygiene products, including nonbiodegradable wipes.

Level 1 Assessment Update

Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, waterborne pathogens may be present or that a potential pathway exists through which contamination may enter the drinking water distribution system. We found coliforms, indicating the need to look for potential problems in water treatment or distribution. When this occurs, we are required to conduct assessment(s) to identify problems and to correct any problems that were found during these assessments.

During the past year we were required to conduct a Level 1 assessment, which was completed. In addition, we were required to inspect our facilities and sample sites for signs of contamination. We completed these actions and did not find any vulnerability to sources of contamination. Following the assessment determination, we requested a lab inspection to identify potential sources of error or contamination.



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We remain vigilant in
delivering the best-quality
drinking water
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Source Water Assessment Program

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) report for the water supply sources serving this water system. The SWAP report notes the key issues of activities in Zone 1: hazardous material storage and use, residential land use, transportation corridors, oil or hazardous material contamination sites and wellhead protection planning in the water supply protection area for all sources. The report commends the water system on existing source protection measures.

What Can Be Done to Improve Protection?

The SWAP report recommends that the town develop and implement a wellhead protection plan, expand on the scope of the emergency response teams to ensure that they are aware of the storm-water drainage in Zone II.

Natick Water & Sewer Division plans to address the protection recommendations by:

- Continuing to develop and implement a wellhead protection plan,
- Continuing to locate and map the storm-water drainage systems within Zone II,
- Review pending NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Permit.

Residents can help protect sources by:

- Practicing good septic system maintenance,
- Supporting water supply protection initiatives at future town meetings,
- Taking hazardous household chemicals to hazardous materials collection centers on specified days,
- Limiting pesticide and fertilizer use, etc.,
- Taking waste motor oil to the Natick Recycling Center.

What Is My System's Ranking?

A susceptibility ranking of moderate to high was assigned to this system using the information collected during the assessment by MassDEP.

Where Can I See the SWAP Report?

The complete SWAP report is available at the Town of Natick Department of Public Works and online at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/northeast-region-source-water-assessment-protection-swap-program-reports/download>. For more information, call the Natick Water & Sewer Division at (508) 647-6557 or email at water@natickma.org.

Sign Up Today!

We encourage you to sign up for our WaterSmart program today -- It's easy and it's free! This service enables you to track and evaluate your water consumption, detect high usage, view bill history, customize notifications for events such as flushing near you, and more. Log in at <https://natickma.watersmart.com/index.php/welcome> today. As always, feel free to contact the Natick Department of Public Works Water & Sewer Division with any additional questions at (508) 647-6557 or email at water@natickma.org.

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 (back-pressure). 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 (back-siphonage).

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 when 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.

Water Conservation Tips

You can play a role in conserving water and saving 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 can 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.

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. 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 4th stage of the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR4) program by performing additional tests on our drinking water. UCMR4 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, in order to determine if U.S. EPA 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 Contaminants Monitoring Rule, please call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.



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.

Level 1 Assessment: A Level 1 assessment is a study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system.

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 (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.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	HIGHEST RESULT/ HIGHEST RUNNING AVERAGE	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Alpha Emitters (pCi/L)	2017	15	0	0.17	ND-0.17	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2019	2	2	0.02	NA	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	2020	[4]	[4]	0.54	0.03-1.12	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Fluoride (ppm)	2020	4	4	0.8	0.4-0.8	No	Water additive, which promotes strong teeth
Haloacetic Acids [HAAs] (ppb)	2020	60	NA	14	3.3-20	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2020	10	10	2.3	0.65-2.3	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Perchlorate (ppb)	2020	2	NA	0.26	0.07-0.26	No	Inorganic chemicals used as oxidizers in solid propellants for rockets, missiles, fireworks, and explosives
PFAS6* (ppt)	2020	20	NA	25	5.23-26.42	No	Discharges and emissions from industrial and manufacturing sources associated with the production or use of these PFAS, including production of moisture and oil-resistant coatings on fabrics and other materials. Additional sources include the use and disposal of products containing these PFAS, such as firefighting foams
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	2020	80	NA	44	6.7-69	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection

*For latest PFAS6 results and information, see www.natickma.gov/1753/PFAS

Tap Water Samples Collected for Copper and Lead 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)	2019	1.3	1.3	0.261	1/30	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2019	15	0	2.0	1/30	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Manganese ¹ (ppb)	2018	50	NA	14.4	ND-72	No	Leaching from natural deposits

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES ²

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Hardness (ppm)	2020	119.5	88-159	Naturally occurring
Sodium ³ (ppm)	2019	86	51-120	Natural sources; Runoff from use of salt on roadways

UNREGULATED CONTAMINANT MONITORING RULE - PART 4 (UCMR4) ²

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH
Germanium (ppb)	2020	0.05	ND-0.42
HAA6Br (ppb)	2020	11.8	4.0-16.6
HAA5 (ppb)	2020	7.2	1.7-12.1
HAA9 (ppb)	2020	23.2	4.6-27.1
Manganese ¹ (ppb)	2020	104	0.61-587

¹ Manganese is a naturally occurring mineral found in rocks, soil and groundwater, and surface water. Manganese is necessary for proper nutrition and is part of a healthy diet, but can have undesirable effects on certain sensitive populations at elevated concentrations. U.S. EPA and MADEP have established public health advisory levels for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effects.

² Unregulated contaminants are those for which the U.S. EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist U.S. EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

³ The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection maintains a guideline level of 20 ppm for sodium.

Water Hardness Guide

This information is provided so that residents can adjust their appliances (measured as CaCO₃):

AMOUNT (PPM)	RATING
<60 ppm	soft
61-120 ppm	moderately hard
121-180 ppm	hard
>181 ppm	very hard

