

HEALTH NOTES

In order to ensure that **tap water is safe to drink**, the Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations that limit the amounts 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 that must provide the same protection for public health. All 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 EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

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 some 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 and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on lowering the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

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. Housatonic Water Works 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 or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson’s Disease should contact their doctor.

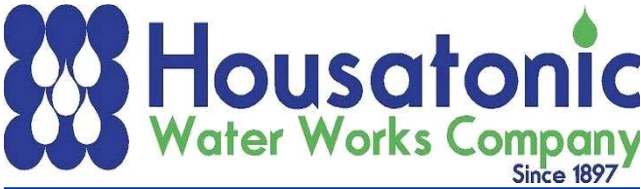
Cross connections are potentially hazardous situations for public or private potable water supply and a source of potable water contamination. A cross connection is any potential or actual physical connection between a potable water supply and any source through which it is possible to introduce any substance other than potable water into the water supply. Common Cross connection scenarios are a garden hose whose spout is submerged in a bucket of soapy water or connected to a spray bottle of weed killer.

Cross Connections between a potable water line and a non-potable water system or equipment have long been a concern of the Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP). MA DEP established regulations to protect the public health of water consumers from contaminants due to back-flow events. The installation of back-flow prevention devices, such as a low-cost hose bib vacuum breaker, for all inside and outside hose connections is recommended. You can purchase this at a hardware store or plumbing supply store. This is a great way for you to help protect the water in your home as well as the drinking water system in your community. For additional information on cross connections and on the status of your water system’s cross connection please contact us at 413-528-1780.

Residents can help protect our water resources by:

- *Practicing good septic system maintenance*
- *Supporting water supply protection initiatives and conservation measures*
- *Disposing of hazardous household chemicals properly by bringing them to hazardous material collection centers*
- *Limiting pesticide and fertilizer use, etc.*

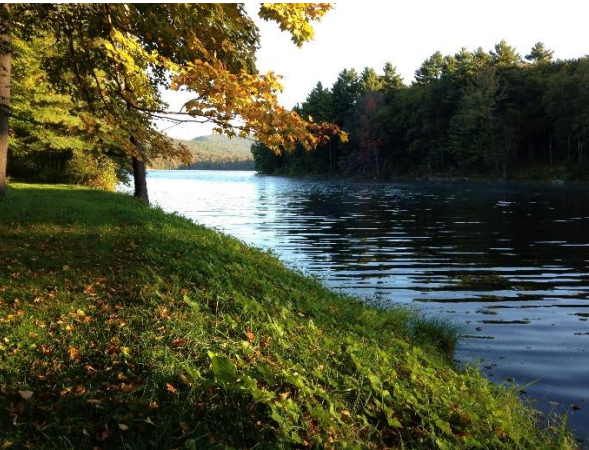
Pure water is the world’s first and foremost medicine.
-SLOVAKIAN PROVERB



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HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS

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2020 Consumer Confidence Report

Your Annual Drinking Water Quality Information

This report provides a snapshot of the drinking water quality that was achieved in 2020. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how its quality compares to state and federal standards. We are committed to providing you with information because informed customers are our best allies.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM INFORMATION

Our water system is routinely inspected by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP). MA DEP inspects our system for its technical, financial, and managerial capacity to provide safe drinking water to you. To ensure that we provide the highest quality of water available, your water system is operated by a Massachusetts certified operator who oversees the routine operations of our system, including the filtration and disinfection treatment processes. Reservoir water is directed through slow sand filters and then a controlled amount of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) is added into a contact time basin. This maze-like structure provides treatment over time that helps ensure complete disinfection of the drinking water. The water is monitored by us and MassDEP to determine the effectiveness of existing water treatment and to check if any additional treatment is warranted.

As part of our ongoing commitment to you we make regular repairs to the system and address concerns of our customers and regulators. We are excited to announce plans for a major improvement and modernization of the company’s drinking water treatment plant. A new ultrafiltration membrane treatment system is proposed to be constructed by 2023 to replace the existing slow sand filters as well as remove manganese that has been causing periodic episodes of yellow and brown water color. HWWC has submitted a proposed preliminary plan to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and MA DEP.

YOUR DRINKING WATER SOURCE

Where Does My Water Come From?

Housatonic Water Works’ water comes from the surface water source, Long Pond Reservoir and is located southwest of the Village of Housatonic. Long Pond has a surface area of 115 acres and storage capacity of 263 million gallons. The source is designated by MA DEP Source Name and ID Source Number as: Long Pond [1113003-01S]. The water system supplies approximately 824 service connections and serves a population of approximately 1300 people. Great Barrington Fire District’s Water system can be used in emergencies. The last Sanitary Survey was conducted in September 2020.

How are these Sources Protected?

MA DEP prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report dated January 2003 to assist in the identification of potential sources of contamination. A susceptibility ranking of “moderate” was assigned to this system. Typical agricultural, commercial and residential land use around surface water sources can contribute to contamination. The SWAP report outlines land activity concerns and commends our water system on the vigilant inspection, monitoring and communication concerning activities in and around our watershed. The complete SWAP report is available at the Housatonic Water Works Office, or by contacting the Western Regional Office of MA DEP at (413)755-2215. You may also view this report online at: www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/drinking/swap/wero/1113000.pdf.

Prepared by Housatonic Basin Sampling & Testing on behalf of your water supplier. This report is a compilation of best available data sources and represents an accurate account of your water quality to the best of our knowledge.

Housatonic Water Works

SUBSTANCES FOUND IN TAP WATER

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. Contaminants 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, 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, and 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.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

Does Drinking Water Meet Current Health Standards?
We are committed to providing you with the best water quality available. We are proud to report that last year your drinking water met all applicable health standards regulated by the state and federal government.

Drinking Water Violations
MassDEP and the EPA did not report that any compliance violations have occurred in 2020. For more information regarding our system you may also visit the EPA website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/search.html>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Housatonic Water Works sponsors semiannual public information meetings and we encourage dialogue on water quality issues on an on-going basis. If you have any questions about the water you drink, please contact, Jim Mercer at Housatonic Water Works’ office.

Our Water Quality Reports and other information are posted on the website: www.housatonicwater.com

UNITS OF MEASURE

- ppm = parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)
- ppb = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)
- ND = Not Detected
- N/A = Not Applicable
- NTU =Nephelometric Turbidity Unit
- pCi/L =Unit measure of radioactivity

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

- Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** – 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.
- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** –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.
- Action Level (AL)** –The concentration of a contaminant, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
- 90th Percentile** – Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level.
- Treatment Technique (TT)** - A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)** - 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.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)** - 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.
- Turbidity** - A measure of the cloudiness of water. Turbidity is monitored because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the filtration system.
- Massachusetts Office of Research and Standards Guidelines (ORSG)** - This is the concentration of a chemical in drinking water, at or below which, adverse health effects are unlikely to occur after chronic (lifetime) exposure.

WATER QUALITY TESTING RESULTS

The water quality tables show the most recent water quality testing results where levels were detected and compares those levels to standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency and Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency.

MA DEP has reduced the monitoring requirements for *inorganic contaminant (IOC’s)*, *perchlorate* and *synthetic organic contaminants (SOC’s)* because the source is not at risk of contamination. Housatonic Water Works’ latest samples collected for Perchlorate and IOC’s were in August 2020 and was found to meet all applicable US EPA and Mass DEP standards.

Regulated Contaminants	Date(s) Collected	90 TH percentile	Action Level	MCLG	# of sites sampled	# of sites above Action Level	Possible Source of Contamination
Lead (ppb)	4/16-19/20	3.0	15	0	20	1	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
	12/10-15/20	8.7					
Copper (ppm)	4/16-19/20	0.77	1.3	1.3	20	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives
	12/10-15/20	0.69					
Regulated Contaminant	Date collected	MCL	MCLG	Level Found	Range of Detections	Violation (Y/N)	Typical Source(s) of Contaminant
Turbidity (NTU)	continuous	TT = 5 NTU	N/A	0.097	0.023 – 0.097	No	Suspended particles
		TT = percentage of samples <1 NTU		100%	N/A	No	

*Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality. Monthly turbidity compliance is related to a specific treatment technique (TT). Our system filters the water so at least 95% of our samples each month must be below the turbidity limits specified in the regulations.

Secondary Contaminants	Date(s) Collected	Result or Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG	Possible Source
Iron (ppb)	Approximately every 2 weeks	< 50 - 93	9.5	300	N/A	Naturally occurring, corrosion of cast iron pipes
Manganese* (ppb)	Approximately every 2 weeks	< 2.0 - 102	13	50	Health Advisory of 300	Natural sources as well as discharges from industrial uses
* EPA has established a lifetime Health Advisory (HA) for manganese of 0.3 mg/L (300 ppb) and an acute HA at 1.0 mg/L (1,000 ppb)						

Inorganic Contaminants						
Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Result or range detected	Average Detected	MCL	MCLG	Violation (Y/N)
Nitrate* (ppm)	31 Aug 2020	0.13	N/A	10	10	N
*Possible NITRATE Contamination sources include runoff from fertilizer use, leaching from septic tanks, sewage, erosion of natural deposits						

Disinfection and Disinfection By-Products						
Regulated Contaminant	Range	Quarter of the highest result	Highest quarterly Locational Running Annual Average	MCL or MRDL	MCLG or MRDLG	Violation (Y/N)
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)	35-75	Q3	49	80	N/A	N
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	28-44	Q4	37	60	N/A	N
Chlorine (ppm) (monitored monthly)	0.05-0.93	N/A	0.31 (avg. of all samples)	4	4	N
Sources of possible contamination - chlorination byproducts from disinfection and industrial process						

Other Contaminants and Unregulated VOC Contaminants						
Unregulated Contaminants	Date(s) Collected	Result or Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG	Possible Source
Chloroform (ppb)	quarterly	21-66	39	N/A	70	contamination sources include by-product of drinking water chlorination (In non-chlorinated sources it may be naturally occurring)
Bromodichloromethane	quarterly	2.8-7.6	4.1	N/A	N/A	contamination sources include Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination
Sodium (ppm)	31 Aug 2020	8.1	N/A	N/A	20	contamination sources include discharge from the use and improper storage of sodium-containing de-icing compounds or in water-softening agents.