

# 2021 Consumer Confidence Report

## Your Annual Drinking Water Quality Information



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**Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection**  
**Public Water Supply ID #1113003**

This report provides a snapshot of the drinking water quality that was achieved last year. 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. A treatment process that includes filtration and disinfection is also provided. Reservoir water is directed through slow sand filters and then a controlled amount of sodium hypochlorite is added and mixed in a contact time basin. This maze-like structure mixes the chlorinated water and 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. MassDEP conducts regular Sanitary Survey inspections on our water system every 3 years to assess and inspect our water system. Our last Sanitary Survey was conducted in September of 2020. As part of our ongoing commitment to you we make regular repairs to the system and address concerns of our customers and regulators.

### **YOUR DRINKING WATER SOURCE**

#### ***Where Does My Drinking 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 2020.

#### ***How are These Sources Protected?***

MassDEP has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for the water supply sources serving this water system. The SWAP Report assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies. A susceptibility ranking of "moderate" was assigned to this system using the information collected during the assessment by MassDEP, which included the absence of hydrogeological barriers that can prevent potential contaminant migration from the surface. Typical agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential land uses can contribute to contamination. The complete SWAP report is available by contacting the Water Department, or online at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/the-source-water-assessment-protection-swap-program>. For more information you may also contact the MassDEP Western Region Office at (413) 755-2215.

*Residents can help protect sources by:*

- *practicing good septic system maintenance,*
- *supporting water supply protection initiatives at the next town meeting*
- *taking hazardous household chemicals to hazardous materials collection days,*
- *contacting the water department or Board of Health to volunteer for monitoring or education outreach to schools,*
- *Limiting pesticide and fertilizer use, etc.*

## **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. Last year we conducted hundreds of water tests for over 80 contaminants. While nearly all of these tests showed that our water quality meets or exceeds MassDEP and EPA standards, there were two instances of violations which are described below.

During our third quarterly test for Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) and Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) taken on 8/9/21, it was determined that our levels were above the maximum contaminant level (MCL). MassDEP has set the MCL for HAA5 at 60ppb and the MCL for TTHM at 80ppb. Our results from the August 9, 2021 samples showed our HAA5 level at 103.1ppb and TTHM level at 97.9ppb.

During our fourth quarterly test for Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) taken on 11/10/21, it was determined that our level was again above the MCL, with a result of 77.3ppb. While this was an improvement on the previous result from the third quarter, it was still above the MassDEP maximum contaminant level of 60ppb.

The Company's engineers are preparing a report to address the HAA5 issue. Additional information will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

## **IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS**

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCL's are set as close to the MCLG's 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 expected risk to health. MCLG's allow for a margin of safety.

**Action Level (AL)** - The concentration of a contaminant which, 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.

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

**Unregulated Contaminants** - Contaminants for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose is to assist EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

**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 contamination.

**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.

MassDEP has reduced the monitoring requirements for Perchlorate, Inorganic Contaminants (IOCs), and Synthetic Organic Contaminants (SOCs), because the source is not at risk of contamination. The last sample was collected In 7/14/2021 for Perchlorate, 7/14/2021 for Inorganic Contaminants, and 6/1/2021 for SOCs, and all were found to meet all applicable US EPA and MassDEP standards. The water quality information presented in the table is from the most recent round of testing done in accordance with the regulations. All data shown was collected during the last calendar year unless otherwise noted in the table. With the exception of those compounds noted on the tables below, all other compounds reported undetectable levels. "Quarterly" samples were collected on the following dates: 2/9/2021, 5/10/2021, 8/9/2021 & 11/10/2021

Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Highest Result or Running Annual Average <sup>2</sup>	Range Detected	MCL	MCLG	Violation (Yes/No)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
<b>INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS</b>							
<i>Perchlorate (ppb)</i>	<i>7/14/2021</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rocket propellants, fireworks, munitions, flares, blasting agents.</i>
<b>DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS</b>							
<i>Chlorine Residual (ppm)</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>1.44<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>0.96-1.90</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Byproduct of drinking water chlorination</i>
<i>Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>66.5<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>39.3-97.9</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Yes*</i>	<i>Byproduct of drinking water chlorination</i>
<i>*While the average for the year did not exceed the MCL there was an individual MCL violation that was determined during August sampling. Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.</i>							
<i>Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>73.5<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>55.5-103.1</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Byproduct of drinking water disinfection</i>
<i>Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.</i>							
Contaminant (units)	Dates Collected	Result or Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG	Possible Source(s) of Contamination	
<b>UNREGULATED AND SECONDARY CONTAMINANTS</b>							
<i>Sodium (ppm)</i>	<i>7/14/2021</i>	<i>8.85</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Natural Sources, runoff from use of salt on roadways, byproduct of water treatment process.</i>	
<i>Chloroform (ppb)</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>36-91</i>	<i>61.4</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination</i>	
<i>Some people who drink water containing chloroform at high concentrations for many years could experience liver and kidney problems and may have an increased risk of cancer.</i>							
<i>Bromodichloromethane (ppb)</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>3.3-6.9</i>	<i>5.125</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination</i>	
<i>Some people who drink water containing bromodichloromethane at high concentrations for many years could experience liver and kidney problems.</i>							
<b>LEAD AND COPPER – Q2 () and Q4 ()</b>							
Contaminant (units)	Action Level	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Number of Sites Sampled	Number of sites above the Action Level	Possible Sources of Contamination	Violation (Yes/No)	
<i>Lead (ppb)</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Q2 – 2.3 Q4 - &lt;1</i>	<i>Q2 -20 Q4 - 20</i>	<i>Q2 – 1 Q4 - 0</i>	<i>Corrosion of household plumbing</i>	<i>No</i>	
<i>Copper (ppm)</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>Q2 – 1.1 Q4 – 0.1</i>	<i>Q2 -20 Q4 - 20</i>	<i>Q2 – 1 Q4 - 0</i>	<i>Corrosion of household plumbing</i>	<i>No</i>	

Turbidity	TT	Lowest monthly % of Samples	Highest Detected Daily Value	Violation	Possible Sources of Contamination
Daily Compliance (NTU)	5	N/A	0.086	No	Soil Runoff
Monthly Compliance*	At least 95%	100%	N/A	No	
<i>Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality.</i>					
<i>*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.</i>					

ppm = parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)  
ppb = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)

N/A = Not Applicable  
NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

## HEALTH NOTES

In order to ensure that **tap water is safe to drink**, the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations that limit 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 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 Environmental Protection Agency 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 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>.

**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 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 program, please contact Jim Mercer.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Housatonic Water Works sponsors bi-annual 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. For more information regarding our system, you may also visit the EPA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/search.htm>

*This report is a compilation of best available data sources including: licensed operators' reports, water supply owner's coordination. MassDEP public records and EPA online records. The report represents an accurate account of your water quality to the best of our knowledge. Prepared by Housatonic Basin Sampling & Testing on behalf of your water supplier.*