2025 Consumer Confidence Report

Your Annual Drinking Water Quality Information

HOUSATONIC WATER WORKS

80 MAPLE AVE, SUITE 1, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230

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 (MassDEP) 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. In 2023 HWWC upgraded the water treatment system to allow for two-stage chlorination with the goal of reducing the formation of disinfection byproducts such as HAA's and THM's. In 2025 construction of a greensand filtration facility began to address seasonal manganese discoloration, including a new treatment building, filtration equipment, and upgraded monitoring equipment. This agreement was signed with MassDEP to construct the greensand filtration system by June 1, 2026. Our last Sanitary Survey conducted by the MassDEP was completed on October 6, 2023. All compliance tasks have been completed.

Contact Person: James Mercer (Water Operator) | Phone: (413)528-1780

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 MassDEP 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.

How are These Sources Protected?

A Source Water Assessment (SWAP) Report for our water supply source has been prepared by MA DEP and lists its susceptibility to contamination. A susceptibility ranking of "moderate" was assigned based on land use characteristics. For example, the absence of hydrogeological barriers that can prevent potential contaminant migration from the surface is a noted concern. Typical agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential uses can also contribute to potential vectors for contamination. This report is available online at https://www.mass.gov/service-details/the-source-water-assessment-protection-swap-program

IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION

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/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 (1-800-426-4791).

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 15 contaminants. While nearly all of these tests showed that our water quality meets or exceeds MassDEP and EPA standards, or visit the EPA website at: http://www.epa.gov/enviro/sdwis-search-user-guide

The Company has worked with engineers and MassDEP to correct the HAA5 issue. The new 2-stage chlorine disinfection process has proven effective in controlling disinfection byproducts. The process will be monitored in the upcoming years for continued control of byproduct formation, while maintaining compliance with disinfection requirements, and preventing bacteria within the distribution system.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT- ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ORDER

In July 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) issued an Administrative Consent Order with Penalty (ACOP, ENF Document #00016953) requiring Housatonic Water Works to construct a greensand filtration treatment system to address seasonal manganese discoloration. The original deadline for completion of construction was March 1, 2026. On December 31, 2025, MassDEP granted an extension of the construction deadline to June 1, 2026, due to delays in resolving pending litigation and securing a vendor. Construction of the manganese treatment system (including a new treatment building, filtration equipment, and upgraded monitoring equipment) began in 2025. We continue to work with engineers and MassDEP to complete the project by the revised deadline of June 1, 2026. On December 23, 2025, a water emergency was declared due to reduced filter performance. An emergency interconnection with the Great Barrington Fire District is currently maintaining service to customers while a permanent resolution is implemented.

SUBSTANCES FOUND IN TAP WATER

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. 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, 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 byproducts 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.

ACRONYMS IN RESULTS TABLES

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

ND = Not Detected
N/A = Not Applicable
CU = Color Unit
NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Units

WATER QUALITY TESTING RESULTS

The following water quality tables show the most recent water quality testing results where levels were detected and compares those levels to standards set by the EPA and MassDEP.
MassDEP has reduced the monitoring requirements for Inorganic Contaminants (IOCs), and Synthetic Organic Contaminants (SOCs) because the source is not at risk of contamination. The last sample was collected on 7/12/2023 for Perchlorate, 7/14/2021 for IOC contaminants, 6/1/2021 for SOCs, 7/24/2024 for Radioactive Contaminants, 7/8/2025 for Sodium, Monthly for Iron and Manganese, 10/30/2023 for Volatile Organic Compound (VOCs), and 4/10/2024 for PFAS6 all were found to meet all applicable US EPA and MassDEP standards. The water quality information presented in the tables 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, reported undetectable levels.

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.

Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Highest Result or Running Annual Average[2]	Range Detected	MCL	MCLG	Violation (Yes/No)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS							
Perchlorate (ppb)	*7/12/2023*	*0.074*	*N/A*	*2*	*N/A*	*No*	*Rocket propellants, fireworks, munitions, flares, blasting agents.*
Nitrate (ppm)	*7/8/2025*	*0.0811*	*N/A*	*10*	*10*	*No*	*Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks; sewage; erosion of natural deposits*
DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS							
Chlorine Residual (ppm)	*Daily*	*1.6 11/9/2025*	*1.0-1.6*	*4*	*4*	*No*	*Byproduct of drinking water chlorination*
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)	*Quarterly (2 Locations)*	*57.7*	*44.4-78.7*	*80*	*N/A*	*No*	*Byproduct of drinking water chlorination*
**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.*							
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	*Quarterly (2 Locations)*	*52.075*	*42.6-58.3*	*60*	*N/A*	*No*	*Byproduct of drinking water disinfection*
** Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.*							

Contaminant (units)	Dates Collected	Result or Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
UNREGULATED AND SECONDARY CONTAMINANTS						
Sodium (ppm)	*7/8/2025*	*8.2*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*20*	*Natural Sources, runoff from use of salt on roadways, byproduct of water treatment process.*
Chloroform (ppb)	*Quarterly (2 Locations)*	*38.9-70.3*	*51.5*	*N/A*	*70*	*Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination*
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.						
Bromodichloro-methane (ppb)	*Quarterly (2 Locations)*	*4.7-8.48*	*6*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination*
Some people who drink water containing bromodichloromethane at high concentrations for many years could experience liver and kidney problems.						
Dibromochlorometha-ne (ppt)	*Quarterly (2 Locations)*	*ND-0.99*	*0.19*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Trihalomethane; by-product of drinking water chlorination*
Some people who drink water containing Dibromochloromethane at high concentrations for many years could experience liver and kidney problems.						
*Manganese ** (ppb)*	*Monthly (3 Locations)*	*ND-51*	*10.51*	*50*	*300*	*Naturally occurring, corrosion of cast iron pipes*
US EPA and MassDEP have established public health advisory levels for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effects and a one-day and 10-day HA of 1000ppb for acute exposure.						
Color (C.U.)	*Monthly (3 Locations)*	*ND-30*	*8.61*	*15*	*N/A*	*May produce a visible tint.*
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) (ppm)	*Monthly (3 Locations)*	*78-179*	*119*	*500*	*N/A*	*Erosion of natural deposits.*

LEAD AND COPPER – Q2 (April & May 2025) and Q4 (November & December 2025)

Contaminant (units)	Action Level	90th Percentile	Number of Sites Sampled	Number of sites above the Action Level	Possible Sources of Contamination	Violation (Yes/No)
Lead (ppb)	*15*	*Q2 – 1.9 Q4 – 2.6*	*Q2 -20 Q4 - 20*	*Q2 – 0 Q4 - 0*	*Corrosion of household plumbing*	*No*
Copper (ppm)	*1.3*	*Q2 – 0.40 Q4 – 0.90*	*Q2 -20 Q4 - 20*	*Q2 – 0 Q4 - 0*	*Corrosion of household plumbing*	*No*

Turbidity	TT	Lowest monthly % of Samples	Highest Detected Daily Value	Violation	Possible Sources of Contamination
Daily Compliance (NTU)	*1*	*------*	*0.525 9/15/2025*	*No*	*Soil Runoff*
Monthly Compliance*	*At Least 95%*	*100%*	*-----*	*No*	
Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality and filtration effectiveness.					
**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.*					

HEALTH NOTES

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA and MassDEP prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA and Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

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 and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home. You share the responsibility for protecting yourself and your family from the lead in your home plumbing. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Before drinking tap water, flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact Housatonic Water Works at 413-528-1780. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

SERVICE LINE INVENTORY AND LEAD AWARENESS

In 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandated that all Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC) and Community (COM) water systems conduct a service line inventory to identify and document the materials of all service connections. As part of this effort, Housatonic Water Works was required to catalogue and report on all service connections within its water system.

To review the Service Line Inventory (2024) for Housatonic Water Works, visit the State of Massachusetts Public Water Supplier Document Search webpage:
https://www.mass.gov/info-details/public-water-supplier-document-search

1. Select the name of the water supply (Housatonic Water Works).
2. Navigate to the "Documents for Download" section.
3. Open the file titled "Service Line Inventory (2024)."

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.

Residents can help protect sources by:

- *practicing good septic system maintenance,*
- *supporting water supply protection initiatives*
- *proper disposal of hazardous materials*
- *volunteer for monitoring or education outreach*
- *limit pesticide, fertilizers, or other chemical use*

Housatonic Water Works Company
Since 1897

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2025 Consumer Confidence Report

Your Annual Drinking Water Quality Information

GREAT BARRINGTON FIRE DISTRICT WATER DEPARTMENT

17 East Street Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Public Water Supply ID# 1113000

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 Massachusetts certified operators who oversee the routine operations of our system. Your water is treated by adding a controlled amount of sodium hypochlorite for disinfection and is constantly monitored by us and MA DEP to determine the effectiveness of existing water treatment and to determine if any additional treatment is required.

YOUR DRINKING WATER SOURCE

Where Does My Drinking Water Come From?

Great Barrington Fire District’s water comes from groundwater out of the Green River infiltration gallery located in western-central Great Barrington. The source is designated by MA DEP Source Name and ID Source Number as: Green River [1113000-01G]. On July 26, 2025, our maximum daily consumption (M.D.C.) was 1,016,000 gallons. The total water pumped for the year was 207,005,400 gallons. Great Barrington's water system supplies approximately 1,728 service connections, 59 sprinkler lines, 324 fire hydrants and services a population of approximately 4,380. A surface water reservoir is available as an emergency supply.

How are These Sources Protected?

MA DEP prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report that was published in March 2003 to assist in the identification of potential sources of contamination. A susceptibility ranking of "high" was assigned to this system. The shallow sand and gravel aquifer characteristics absence of hydrologic barriers such as clay makes it susceptible to ground surface contaminant migration.

How Can I Get a copy of The SWAP Report?

The complete SWAP report is available at the Great Barrington Fire District's Office, or by contacting the Western Region Office of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection at (413) 784-1100. You may also view this report on our website at: ***greatbarringtonwater.org***

This report is a compilation of best available data sources including: licensed operators' reports, water supply owner's coordination. MA DEP public records and EPA online records. The report represents an accurate account of your water quality to the best of our knowledge.

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, however some contaminants that were tested last year did not meet all applicable health standards regulated by the state and federal government.

Opportunities for Public Participation

If you would like to participate in discussions regarding your water quality, you may attend the Prudential Committee Meetings held on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meeting dates and times are duly posted at the Great Barrington Fire District Office and the Great Barrington Town Hall.

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 (IT) - 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. MRDLG's do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
Method of Detection Limit (MDL) - The minimum concentration of a substance that can be measured and reported with 99% confidence the analyte concentration is greater than zero and determined from analysis of a sample in a given matrix containing the analyte.
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.
Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) – These standards are developed to protect aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

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 DEP.

MA DEP may reduce the monitoring requirements for volatile organic contaminants (VOC), inorganic contaminant (IOC), or synthetic organic contaminants (SOC) because the source is not at risk of contamination. Great Barrington Fire District currently has not applied for and holds no waivers.

With the exception of those compounds noted on the tables below, all other compounds tested for reported undetectable levels.

	Date(s) Collected	90th (%)	Action Level	MCLG	Sites Sampled
Lead (ppb)	*Quarter 3 2024*	*0.0022*	*0.015*	*0*	*20*

*Possible LEAD Contamination sources include Corrosion of household plumbing and erosion of natural deposits.

	Highest # of Positive (month)	MCL	MCLG	Violation
Total Coliform	*0*	*1*	*0*	*No*

*Possible sources of contamination, naturally present in the environment.

Copper (ppm)	*Quarter 3 2024*	*0.17*	*1.3*	*1.3*	*20*

**Possible COPPER Contamination sources include Corrosion of household plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits and leaching from wood preservatives.*

Fecal Coliform (or E. coli)	0	*	0	No

**Possible sources of contamination, human and fecal waste.*
**MCL compliance is determined upon additional repeat testing.*

Regulated Contaminant	Date (s) Collected	Result	Detection Limit	*MCI* (MG/L)	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
Nitrate (ppm)	8/12/2025	0.306	0.0500	10	N	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks; sewage; erosion of natural deposits.
Perchlorate (ppm)	8/12/2025	0.083	2.0	0.012	N	Result of water disinfection.

Secondary Contaminant	Date (s) Collected	Result	SMCL	MDL	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
Iron (mg/L)	8/12/2025	<0.072	0.3	0.072	N	Result of deteriorated plumbing.
Manganese (mg/L)	8/12/2025	<0.0052	0.05	N/A	N	Natural deposits commonly found in rocks and soil, dissolving into the ground and water.

EPA has established a lifetime Health Advisory (HA) for manganese at 0.3 mg/L and an acute HA at 1.0 mg/L

UNITS OF MEASURE

ppm = parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)
ppb = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)
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N/A = Not Applicable
NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

For a full copy of the water quality testing results please visit our website at ***www.greatbarringtonwater.org***

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 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. 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 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. Great Barrington Fire District 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 hrtp://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

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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:

Peter H. Marks, Superintendent / Senior Water Operator
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17 East Street / Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230
Phone: (413) 528-0133 / Fax: (413) 528-6061 gbwater@verizon.net

For more information regarding our system, you may also visit the EPA website at:
http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/search.htm