

# ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2025

*Presented By*



WATERTOWN FIRE DISTRICT  
**WATER • SEWER**  
*Your Local Water Utility*



## Where Does My Water Come From?

Watertown Fire District customers are fortunate because we enjoy an abundant water supply. Our water source is groundwater pumped by wells, which are located along the Nonnewaug River in Woodbury. The district also owns and operates two surface reservoirs: Lockwood Reservoir, which is located in Bethlehem, and Judd Pond, which is located in Watertown. These reservoirs are used to augment the flow of water in the Nonnewaug River to replenish the groundwater removed by our wells.

## Important Health Information

Sources of lead in drinking water include corrosion of household plumbing systems and erosion of natural deposits. Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Sources of copper in drinking water include corrosion of household plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits, and leaching from wood preservatives. Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a 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 consult their personal doctor.

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. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (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 at (800) 426-4791.



## Public Meetings

Please remember that we are always available to assist you should you ever have any questions or concerns about your water. We want you, our valued customers, to be informed about your water utility. You can attend the district commission's regularly scheduled meetings on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the district office, 24 DeForest Street.

## Substances That Could Be in 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 occur naturally in the soil or groundwater or may 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 occur naturally or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. 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.

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 mean that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by contacting the U.S. EPA by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or visiting [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater).



**QUESTIONS?** For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Michael Tanuis, Superintendent, at (860) 274-6332.

## 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 (backpressure). 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 (backsiphonage).

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 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 Treatment Processes

Water pumped from the district wells is treated with a disinfectant (chlorine) as a precaution to protect consumers from potentially harmful bacteria. We carefully monitor the amount of chlorine, adding the lowest quantity necessary to protect the safety of your water without compromising taste. The water is also treated with a small amount of sodium hydroxide to make the water less corrosive. This is important in reducing the amounts of metals such as copper and lead that may be picked up by the water from consumers' homes and businesses. This finished water is then pumped into our network of distribution pipes to reach our residential and business customers.

## Source Water Assessment

The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), in cooperation with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), completed an assessment of the Hart Farm well field, a source of public drinking water that is maintained and operated by the Watertown Fire District Water Department.

This one-time assessment is part of a nationwide effort mandated by Congress under the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996. The assessment aims to evaluate the susceptibility of all public drinking water sources in Connecticut to potential sources of contamination. The assessment is intended to provide the Watertown Fire District Water Department consumers with information about where their public drinking water comes from, sources of potential contamination that could impact it, and what can be done to help protect it. Based on a combination of current field and source water area conditions, existing potential contaminant sources, and level of source protection measures currently in place, the source water assessment for this well field indicates that it has overall low risk of contamination from identified potential sources of contamination. For more information on the assessment report, or to view a copy, contact the Watertown Fire District office by calling (860) 274-6332.

“Water is the driving force of all nature.”

-Leonardo da Vinci

## Lead in Home Plumbing

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 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, or 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. Contact us if you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have it tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://epa.gov/safewater/lead).

To address lead in drinking water, public water systems were required to develop and maintain an inventory of service line materials by October 16, 2024. Developing an inventory and identifying the location of lead service lines (LSL) is the first step for beginning LSL replacement and protecting public health. The lead service inventory is available to review at our office, 24 DeForest Street. Please contact us if you would like more information about the inventory or any lead sampling that has been done.



## Source Water Protection

Source water is untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, or ground aquifers that is used to supply public drinking water. Preventing drinking water contamination at the source makes good public health sense, good economic sense, and good environmental sense. You can be aware of the challenges of keeping drinking water safe and take an active role in protecting drinking water. There are lots of ways that you can get involved in drinking water protection activities to prevent the contamination of the groundwater sources. Dispose properly of household chemicals, help clean up the watershed that is the source of your community's water, and attend public meetings to ensure that the community's need for safe drinking water is considered in making decisions about land use. Contact us at the Watertown Fire District at (860) 274-6332 for more information on source water protection, or contact the U.S. EPA at (800) 426-4791. You may also find information on the U.S. EPA's website at [epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection](http://epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection).

## 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 them.


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 and 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.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 **82** The average number of gallons of water an American uses per day.

 **27%** The percent of household water use attributable to toilets.

 **700** The average number of gallons that a household can save each year with water-efficient fixtures.

 **50-100** The typical design lifespan of underground drinking water pipes, in years.

## 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 (a complete list of all our analytical results is available upon request). 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 is included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

We participated in the fifth stage of the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR5) program by performing additional tests on our drinking water. UCMR5 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 to determine if it needs to introduce new regulatory standards to improve drinking water quality. Unregulated contaminant monitoring data is 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 Contaminant Monitoring Rule, please call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

### REGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Alpha Emitters (pCi/L)	2023	15	0	-0.36	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2025	2	2	0.0213	NA	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	2025	[4]	[4]	1.25	0.67–1.25	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Combined Radium (pCi/L)	2023	5	0	0.28	0.203–0.28	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Haloacetic Acids [HAA5] (ppb)	2025	60	NA	6.37	3.50–6.37	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2025	10	10	0.265	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Total Trihalomethanes [TTHMs] (ppb)	2025	80	NA	11.9	8.78–11.9	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Turbidity <sup>1</sup> (NTU)	2025	TT	NA	1.60	NA	No	Soil runoff

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH %ILE)	RANGE LOW-HIGH	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2025	1.3	1.3	0.8157	0.0355–1.93	1/21	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2025	15	0	1.7	ND–3.6	0/21	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

<sup>1</sup>Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is monitored because it is a good indicator of water quality and the effectiveness of disinfectants.

## Definitions

**90th %ile:** The levels reported for lead and copper represent the 90th percentile of the total number of sites tested. The 90th percentile is equal to or greater than 90% of our lead and copper detections.

**AL (Action Level):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

**Herbicide:** Any chemical(s) used to control undesirable vegetation.

**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.

**MFL (million fibers per liter):** A measure of the presence of asbestos fibers that are longer than 10 micrometers.

**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.

**NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units):** Measurement of the clarity, or turbidity, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

**pCi/L (picocuries per liter):** A measure of radioactivity.

**Pesticide:** Generally, any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest.

**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).

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

**TT (Treatment Technique):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.