

WATER FOR LIVING



2019 Drinking Water
Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)
City of Columbus, Ohio

HOW TO CONTACT US

For additional information or questions about Columbus water quality please call the Water Quality Assurance Lab at 614-645-7691, or visit our website at www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/.

For questions involving billing, accounts, service calls, bill payments, and additional CCR copies please contact Customer Service at: 614-645-8276.

For questions involving water emergencies, waterline breaks, hydrant damage or leaks, please contact Distribution Maintenance at: 614-645-7788.

We're interested in your questions and concerns about your water. The Sewer and Water Advisory Board meetings are open to the public. Call 614-645-3956 for a schedule of meeting times and dates.

Call (311) for City Services or 614-645-3111, or visit the web at <https://311.columbus.gov/>

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES

Division of Water
910 Dublin Road
Columbus, OH 43215

www.columbus.gov/Utilities/

City of Columbus
Andrew J. Ginther, Mayor

Department of Public Utilities
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Division of Water
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WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE

The City of Columbus' Water Quality Assurance Laboratory (WQAL) is a large modern water lab with a long history of distinguished public service starting under the noted water quality chemist Charles Hoover. The lab continues to maintain that tradition of excellence and technical innovation in the ongoing use of state-of-the-art equipment for water analysis, while continuing to research the latest advancements in water treatment techniques.

The WQAL performs water quality monitoring and treatment research to ensure that Columbus' drinking water meets or is better than all federally mandated Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) standards. The WQAL also provides water quality information to the water treatment plants and addresses customer complaints and inquiries regarding water quality. In 2019, the WQAL's EPA licensed and certified laboratory staff completed over 80,000 analyses relating to 33 different organic, inorganic, and microbiological water quality parameters.

To maintain compliance with current SDWA regulations, WQAL activities in 2019 were again directed at the National Primary Drinking Regulations, the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule, the Lead and Copper Rule, the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR), Stage 2 of the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts Rule (D/DBP), and the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2ESWTR). Additionally, the lab has been closely involved in planning the improvement of watershed and water distribution system surveillance and detection measures for security concerns and to maintain heightened security protocols.

The Columbus Public Water System failed to send the THM monitoring results of samples collected and analyzed in March 2019 to Ohio EPA and to other public water systems by the tenth day following the date the analysis were completed, as required by Ohio EPA. We have taken steps to ensure the required reporting will be performed in the future.

As with the WQAL staff, the State of Ohio licenses and certifies the water plant operators who are charged with running and maintaining each of the three water treatment plants. These operators also perform the critical task of treatment and process monitoring to insure that the water leaving the plant is of the highest quality. In order to stay current in the ever-changing technical field of water purification, these operators spend many hours of continuing education in the classroom every year.

TAP WATER - THE BEST DEAL AROUND

On average, a gallon of tap water in the greater Columbus area costs less than half of a penny. When compared to the costs of other products we consume every day, tap water is the best deal around.

A gallon of tap water costs \$0.004. That's less than half a penny per gallon.
Bottled water costs over 1,000 times more than tap water.



A Liter of
Bottled Water

Average Cost
\$1 - \$1.50



A Gallon of
Bottled Water

Average Cost
\$1 - \$1.20



A Gallon of
Tap Water

Average Cost
Less Than Half a Penny



3 Gallons of
Tap Water

Average Cost
Just Over a Penny
at \$0.012

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EPA's National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for
Consumer Confidence Reports requires that we produce
and deliver this report to all of our customers annually.

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SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

A high-quality source water supply allows the Division of Water to provide consumers with quality water at a reasonable cost. Protecting our raw water sources requires investments to secure the needs of a growing population, now and in the future. As part of its on-going efforts to maintain regulatory compliance and monitor our water supply, the Division of Water has completed two Source Water Assessment plans – one for groundwater and one for surface water. Both plans are endorsed by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) as an effective source water protection strategy. Below is a synopsis of the results.

The City of Columbus water system uses surface water from the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek, as well as ground water pumped from sand and gravel deposits of the Scioto River Valley. All three sources of water have a relatively high susceptibility to contamination from spills or releases of chemicals. The ground water pumped at the Parsons Avenue plant is susceptible (compared to other ground water systems) because there is no significant clay overlying and protecting the aquifer deposits. The Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek are even more susceptible because they are more accessible and less protected from spills.

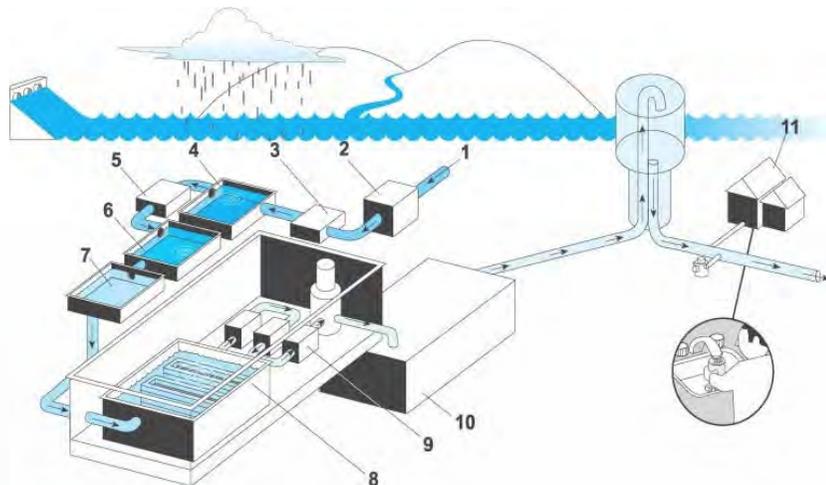
The drinking water source protection areas for the City of Columbus' three water sources contain numerous potential contaminant sources, especially the protection area for the Dublin Road Water Treatment Plant (extending along the Scioto River). These include industrial activities, storm water runoff from developing areas, and a heavily traveled transportation network running alongside and over the water bodies. Run-off from agricultural fields is a concern in both the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek watersheds.

The City of Columbus treats the water to meet drinking water quality standards, but no single treatment protocol can address all potential contaminants. The City has been proactive in pursuing measures to further protect its source waters. These include land stewardship programs and incentive-driven programs to reduce erosion and run-off of pesticides and fertilizers into the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek and their reservoirs. More detailed information is provided in the City of Columbus' Drinking Water Source Assessment Report, which can be viewed by calling the Watershed section at 614-645-1721. Visit www.columbus.gov/watershed/ for more details about watershed management and the land stewardship program.



Less than 1% of the world's fresh water supplies are available for human consumption.

THE WATER TREATMENT PROCESS



The City of Columbus, Division of Water uses a complex multi-barrier approach utilizing state of the art equipment and the latest treatment technologies.

Water flows (1) to the treatment plant from the reservoir or stream through rotating screens (2) to remove large debris. It is then pumped into the plant where alum is added (3) to cause coagulation. After rapid mixing, the water remains in the settling basin (4) while sedimentation of floc occurs (2-4 hours). The water treatment residual (settled floc) is pumped from the bottom of the pools and stored in holding lagoons to dry.

The softening process (5) involves the addition of sodium carbonate (soda ash) or caustic soda and hydrated lime to remove calcium and magnesium ions that are responsible for water hardness. This process takes an additional 2-4 hours. For each pound of chemical used in the treatment process, two pounds are removed.

After an additional sedimentation process, carbon dioxide is added (6) to lower the pH level to approximately 7.8. Ozone is then added to the water to reduce dissolved organic matter (7). Water then flows through large biologically active filters made up of granular activated carbon (8) to remove any remaining particles and further reduce dissolved organic matter.

Addition of chlorine to disinfect the water, fluoride to protect teeth and a corrosion inhibitor take place at the end of the process (9) before water enters large underground clearwells (10) to be held until needed by the community (11).

Please note: When ground water is used (as in the case of the Parsons Avenue Water Plant), neither screening (2) nor initial sedimentation (3,4), nor ozone (7) is needed.

WHAT'S NOT IN YOUR WATER

Reports on TV and in the press often raise concerns about the health risks associated with the presence of certain minerals, chemicals, or other contaminants in your food or water. The Columbus Division of Water performs tens of thousands of tests each year to ensure drinking water quality. Many substances for which the division tests never appear in this report because they are not found in the drinking water. For example, there are 51 volatile organic chemicals as well as arsenic, perchlorate, asbestos, MTBE, radium 228, microcystins, mercury, 1,2,3-Trichloropropane (TCP) and ammonia (just to name a few) that are NOT found in your drinking 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 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 can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems; and radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, USEPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in drinking water provided by public water systems. 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 indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.



LEAD IN THE HOME

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. The City of Columbus 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 thirty seconds to three (3) 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. A list of laboratories certified in the State of Ohio to test for lead may be found at <https://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/labcert> or by calling 614-644-2752. 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 1-800-426-4791 or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

The lead concentration in the drinking water leaving our water treatment plants is below the level of detection. Most homes in the Columbus area do not have lead service lines and have little to no detectable levels of lead in their tap water.

You can also call 614-645-8276 for your free copy of "Tips to Help Reduce Exposure to Lead in Your Water." This information can also be found online at www.columbus.gov/LeadinWater/. Our lead program is being used to meet a portion of the notification requirements of OAC Rule 3745-83-02.

PROTECTING WATER FROM BACKFLOW

Homes with underground irrigation systems and most non-residential buildings are required by the Division of Water to have a backflow prevention device. These backflow devices protect the public water system from any potentially contaminated water flowing back into the public system from a customer's plumbing. Some examples requiring backflow systems include: swimming pools, restaurants, medical facilities, laboratories, car washes, automotive shops, industrial sites and property with a well or pond.

A cross-connection is a physical connection between a possible source of contamination and the drinking water system piping. If the pressure of the source of contamination is greater than the water system pressure, contaminated water may backflow into the drinking water system. Pressure drops in the public water system caused by water line breaks, pump failures, and fire-fighting can also cause a backflow situation. If our rules and regulations require a backflow preventer, it must be tested annually by a tester you hire who is approved by our office. Additional information is on our web site at www.columbus.gov/backflow/.

YOUR 2019 WATER QUALITY REPORT

The goal of the Division of Water is to ensure that any contaminants in your drinking water are restricted below a level at which there is no known health risk. This report shows the types and amounts of key elements in your water supply, their likely sources and the maximum contaminant level (MCL) that the EPA considers safe. The water delivered to your home meets ALL of the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). We use a complex multi-barrier treatment process to assure safe drinking water is delivered to our customers. If for any reason the standards are not met, the public will be notified.

Please share this information with other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received it directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools and businesses). You can do so by posting this report in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. You can request additional copies by calling customer service at 614-645-8276 or email to utilityleadrep@columbus.gov or view online at www.columbus.gov/CCR/.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised individuals such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infection. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water.

Cryptosporidium ("Crypto"), for example, is a microscopic organism that, when ingested, can result in diarrhea, fever, and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Crypto comes from animal waste in the watershed and may be found in our source water. Crypto is eliminated by using a multi-barrier water treatment process including coagulation, sedimentation, softening, filtration and disinfection. 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 at 1-800-426-4791.

Columbus' water is regularly tested for organisms that could be harmful to people – including *Cryptosporidium*. Crypto was detected 7 out of 24 times in the Scioto River and 10 out of 24 times in Big Walnut Creek. Also, Crypto was not detected in either the DRWP tap water or the HCWP tap water.

WATER QUALITY IN THE NEWS

The discovery of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water was in the news, both in Ohio and nationally in 2019. PFAS are a group of over 4,000 man-made chemicals that have been used in a variety of products for decades including firefighting foam, nonstick cookware, water resistant clothing, and personal care products. The City of Columbus started voluntary source water testing for PFAS in 2019. Like many other locations, the City did find a few PFAS compounds in the source water in very low amounts. All the test results are well below the Ohio EPA PFAS Action levels. If you have any questions about PFAS testing you can call the Water Quality Assurance Laboratory at 614-645-7691.

NEWBORNS AND NITRATE

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk to infants less than six months of age. Seasonally, the Scioto River can experience elevated levels of nitrate due to agricultural runoff. To reduce the health risk to infants, the City of Columbus recently added a treatment process called anion exchange to the Dublin Road Water Plant to remove nitrate. Anion exchange works like a giant water softener and pulls nitrate from the water as it flows through a bed of resin beads. Extensive water quality testing in the watershed upstream of the water plant by the Water Quality Assurance Laboratory helps to determine when we need to turn on the anion exchange system. Then additional water quality testing of the finished drinking water confirms that the nitrate level has been reduced below 10 ppm and is safe for infants.

Additional information about nitrates can be found online at www.columbus.gov/NitrateFAQs/ or visit www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/ and look under Common Water Quality Concerns for the Elevated Nitrate Levels feature.

TURBIDITY

Utilities that treat surface water and/or filter the water are required to monitor for turbidity which is a measure of the cloudiness of water and is an indication of the effectiveness of our filtration system. The turbidity limit set by the EPA is 0.3 NTU in 95% of the samples analyzed each month, shall not exceed 1 NTU at any time. The highest recorded turbidity for HCWP was 0.42 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 99.9%. The highest recorded turbidity for DRWP was 0.10 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 100%. We are required to monitor your drinking water for turbidity on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards.



The City of Columbus has a current, unconditioned license to operate our public water system.

PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremean Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Violation?	Where did it come from?
				Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range		
Fluoride (ppm)	2019	4	4	0.92	0.84 - 1.01	0.96	0.82 - 1.02	0.93	0.83 - 1.02	No	Water additive – protects teeth
Barium (ppm)	2019	2	2	ND	ND	0.011	NA	N/A	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrate (ppm)	2019	10	10	3.6	< 0.5 - 3.6	1.3	< 0.5 - 1.3	ND	ND	No	Agricultural fertilizer runoff
Atrazine (ppb)	2019	3	3	0.30	< 0.10 - 0.96	< 0.10	< 0.10 - 0.16	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Metribuzin (ppb)	2019	No set level	No goal set	< 0.10	< 0.10 - 0.12	< 0.10	< 0.10 - 0.12	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	2019	80	No goal set	40.6	7.9 - 65.2	41.5	12.6 - 66.2	19.1	14.8 - 22.5	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	2019	60	No goal set	22.3	7.5 - 23.4	31.9	13.0 - 36.3	7.0	6.2 - 7.9	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Organic Carbon	2019	TT (removal ratio >1)	No goal set	2.49	2.07 - 3.48	2.58	2.39 - 2.85	N/A	N/A	No	Naturally present in environment
Total Chlorine (ppm)	2019	4 (MRDL)	4 (MRDLG)	1.41	1.17 - 1.57	1.42	1.17 - 1.58	1.00	0.89 - 1.04	No	Disinfectant
Turbidity (NTU)	2019	TT (<1 NTU)	No goal set	0.10	0.00 - 0.10	0.04	0.02 - 0.42	N/A	N/A	No	Soil runoff
		TT (% meeting Std.)	No goal set	100%		99.9%		N/A			
Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	Action Level (AL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Concentration at 90 th percentile		Range		# of sites found above the Action Level		Violation?	Where did it come from?
Lead (ppb)	2017	15	0	< 1		< 1 - 3.4		0 out of 50		No	Corrosion of household plumbing
Copper (ppm)	2017	1.3	1.3	0.071		0.0060 - 0.1966		0 out of 50		No	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits

OTHER WATER QUALITY PARAMETERS OF INTEREST

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremean Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Where did it come from?
				Annual Average	Range	Annual Average	Range	Annual Average	Range	
pH (units)	2019	7.0 - 10.5 (SMCL)	No goal set	7.8	7.7 - 7.8	7.8	7.8 - 7.9	7.8	7.8 - 7.8	Treatment process
Hardness	2019	No set level	No goal set	122	119 - 125	90	78 - 104	122	121 - 124	Naturally occurring
				(ppm)	7.1	7.0 - 7.3	5.2	4.3 - 6.5	7.1	
Sodium (ppm)	2019	No set level	No goal set	56.8	24.8 - 123.6	17.7	13.5 - 22.2	56	46.6 - 71.5	Natural/Treatment process

If you have any questions about this data please call the Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at 614-645-7691, or www.columbus.gov/Utilities/.

UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS

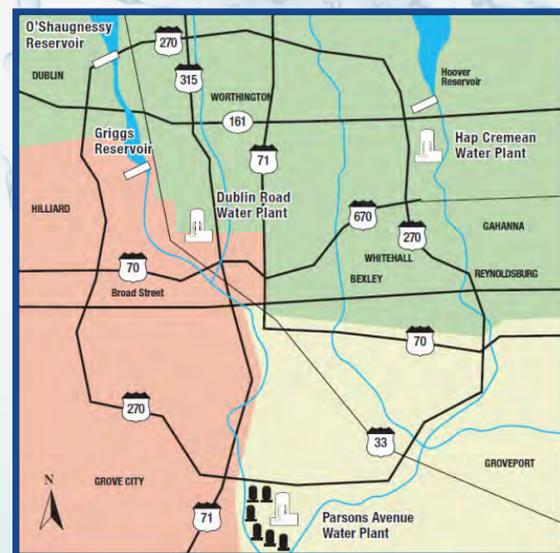
Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremean Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Violation?	Where did it come from?
				Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range		
Manganese (ppb)	2019	No set level	No goal set	19	NA	ND	ND	ND	ND	No	Naturally occurring element

UCMR 4 Monitoring: In 2018 the City of Columbus, Division of Water was required to participate in the fourth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 4.) Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted. If you would like additional information on results of unregulated contaminant monitoring, please call our Water Quality Assurance Lab at 614-645-7691.

WATER SERVICE AREA MAP

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. Each home, school and business in the greater Columbus area receives water from one of the following three water plants:

- Dublin Road Water Plant (DRWP) serves northwestern and southwestern residents using water from Griggs and O'Shaughnessy Reservoirs.
- Hap Cremean Water Plant (HCWP) serves OSU and northern residents. The water source is the Hoover Reservoir.
- Parsons Avenue Water Plant (PAWP) draws water from wells and serves residents in the southeast.



DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

- Action Level (AL) The concentration of a contaminant, which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) The level of a contaminant in drinking water, below which there is no known Goal or expected health risk. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) The highest level of contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLG as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- Secondary MCL (SMCL) A nonenforceable numerical limit set by the USEPA for a contaminant on the basis of aesthetic effects to prevent an undesirable taste, odor, or appearance.
- N/A Not Applicable
- ND No Detect
- NTU Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (a measure of particles held in suspension in water).
- Parts per Billion (ppb) or Micrograms per Liter (ug/L) Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per billion corresponds to one second in roughly 31.7 years.
- Parts per Million (ppm) or Milligrams per Liter (mg/L) Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per million corresponds to one second in roughly 11.5 days.
- Grains per Gallon (gpg) A non-metric unit of measurement for hardness used in North America.
- 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 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.
- The ">" symbol This symbol means "greater than."
- The "<" symbol This symbol means "less than." For example, a result of < 5 means that the lowest level that could be detected was 5 and the contaminant in that sample was not detected.
- Treatment Technique (TT) A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water. For Total Organic Carbon (TOC) the level must be above 1. For turbidity the level must be under 0.3 NTU 95% of the time, and always < 1 NTU.
- Turbidity A measurement of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indication of water quality and the effectiveness of our treatment process.