

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2005

NORFOLK WATER DISTRICTS
PO BOX 481 NORFOLK, NY 13667

Public Water Supply ID# 4404392

INTRODUCTION

To comply with State regulations, the Norfolk Water Districts will be annually issuing a report describing the quality of your drinking water. The purpose of this report is to raise your understanding of drinking water and awareness of the need to protect our drinking water sources. Last year, we conducted tests for over 80 contaminants. We detected seven of those contaminants, and only found one contaminant at a level higher than the State allows. As State regulations require, we began increased monitoring for that contaminant and are working to reduce its level. This report provides an overview of last year's water quality. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to State standards.

If you have any questions about this report or concerning your drinking water, please contact Valley Water Solutions, Inc, your water system operator, at (315) 384-4711. We want you to be informed about your drinking water. If you want to learn more, please attend any of our regularly scheduled Town board meetings. The meetings are held on the second Monday each month. Please call the Town Hall at (315) 384-4821 for more information.

WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?

In general, 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 activities. Contaminants that may be present in source water include: microbial contaminants; inorganic contaminants; pesticides and herbicides; organic chemical contaminants; and radioactive contaminants. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the State and the EPA prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The State Health Department's and the FDA's regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

Our water system serves approximately 2,300 people through 775 service connections. Our water source is groundwater from four drilled wells. Wells 1 & 2 on Crabb Street have been reclassified for emergency use only. Wells 3 & 4 on High Street are first chlorinated, then pumped into the distribution system. System storage is provided by the 500,000 gallon tank on Crabb Street and the 300,000 gallon tank in Raymondville.

The NYS DOH has completed a source water assessment for this system, based on available information. Possible and actual threats to this drinking water source were evaluated. The state source water assessment includes a susceptibility rating based on the risk posed by each potential source of contamination and how easily contaminants can move through the subsurface to the wells. The susceptibility rating is an estimate of the potential for contamination of the source water. It does not mean that the water delivered to consumers is, or will become contaminated. While nitrates, microbials, organic, and inorganic contaminants were detected in our water, it should be noted that all drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants from natural, agricultural, industrial, and/or residential sources. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. See the section entitled, "Are there contaminants in our drinking water?" for a list of the contaminants that have been detected. The source water assessments provide resource managers with additional information for protecting source water into the future.

As mentioned before, our water is derived from 2 drilled wells. The source water assessment has rated these wells as having a medium-high susceptibility to microbials, nitrates, industrial solvents, and other industrial contaminants. These ratings are due primarily to the close proximity of a Toxic Release Inventory Facility to the wells and the associated industrial activity in the assessment area. In addition, Well #2 and Well #3 pump greater than 100 gpm from an unconfined aquifer, and Well #1 draws from an unconfined aquifer which is a shallow aquifer that occurs immediately below the ground surface and has no overlying protection layer for protection from potential sources of contamination. While the source water assessment rates our wells as being susceptible to microbials, please note that our water is disinfected to ensure that the finished water delivered into your home meets New York State's drinking water standards for microbial contamination.

A copy of the assessment can be obtained by contacting us, as noted below.

ARE THERE CONTAMINANTS IN OUR DRINKING WATER?

As the State regulations require, we routinely test your drinking water for numerous contaminants. These contaminants include: total coliform, inorganic compounds, nitrate, nitrite, lead and copper, volatile organic compounds, total trihalomethanes, and synthetic organic compounds. The table presented below depicts which compounds were detected in your drinking water. The State allows us to test for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old.

It should be noted that all drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791) or the NYS Health Department in Canton at (315) 386-1040.

Table of Detected Contaminants							
Contaminant	Violation Yes/No	Date of Sample	Level Detected (Avg/Max) (Range)	Unit Measurement	MCLG	Regulatory Limit (MCL, TT or AL)	Likely Source of Contamination
Lead ¹	No	8/2003	1.7	ug/l	0	AL = 15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.
Copper ²	No	8/2003	.007	mg/l	1.3	AL = 1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives.
Nitrate	No	12/2005	0.22	mg/l	10	N/A	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion from natural deposits.
Fluoride	No	9/2005	0.23	mg/l	2.2	N/A	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
Barium	No	9/2005	.055	mg/l	2.0	MCL = 2.0	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits.

Total Trihalomethanes	Yes	12/2005	83	ug/l	N/A	MCL = 80	By-product of drinking water chlorination needed to kill harmful organisms. TTHMs are formed when source water contains large amounts of organic matter.
Haloacetic Acids	No	12/2005	46	ug/l	N/A	MCL = 60	By-product of drinking water chlorination needed to kill harmful organisms.

Notes:

1 – The level presented represents the 90th percentile of the 10 sites tested. A percentile is a value on a scale of 100 that indicates the percent of a distribution that is equal to or below it. The 90th percentile is equal to or greater than 90% of the lead values detected at your water system. In this case, 10 samples were collected at your water system and the 90th percentile value was 1.7 ug/l. The action level for lead was not exceeded at any of the sites tested.

2 – The level presented represents the 90th percentile of the 10 sites tested. A percentile is a value on a scale of 100 that indicates the percent of a distribution that is equal to or below it. The 90th percentile is equal to or greater than 90% of the copper values detected at your water system. In this case, 10 samples were collected at your water system and the 90th percentile value was 0.007 mg/l. The action level for copper was not exceeded at any of the sites tested.

Definitions:

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

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.

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

Milligrams per liter (mg/l): Corresponds to one part of liquid in one million parts of liquid (parts per million - ppm).

Micrograms per liter (ug/l): Corresponds to one part of liquid in one billion parts of liquid (parts per billion - ppb).

Nanograms per liter (ng/l): Corresponds to one part of liquid to one trillion parts of liquid (parts per trillion - ppt).

WHAT DOES THIS INFORMATION MEAN?

The table shows that our system uncovered a problem this year. The potential health effects for Total Trihalomethanes indicate 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. To try to determine the source of the organic matter that may lead to high trihalomethanes, we have begun a special study to see if wells # 3 and # 4 are being influenced by the surface water of the Raquette River. Secondly, the water crew has begun a program of water main flushing through the fire hydrants. This will be done each spring and fall. It is hoped that organic matter that has accumulated in the distribution piping will be lessened and possibly lead to lower trihalomethane levels.

IS OUR WATER SYSTEM MEETING OTHER RULES THAT GOVERN OPERATIONS?

During 2005, our system was in compliance with applicable State drinking water operating, monitoring and reporting requirements.

DO I NEED TO TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS?

Some people may be more vulnerable to disease causing microorganisms or pathogens 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 from their health care provider about their drinking water. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium, Giardia and other microbial pathogens are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

WHY SAVE WATER AND HOW TO AVOID WASTING IT?

Although our system has an adequate amount of water to meet present and future demands, there are a number of reasons why it is important to conserve water:

- ◆ Saving water saves energy and some of the costs associated with both of these necessities of life;
- ◆ Saving water reduces the cost of energy required to pump water and the need to construct costly new wells, pumping systems and water towers; and
- ◆ Saving water lessens the strain on the water system during a dry spell or drought, helping to avoid severe water use restrictions so that essential fire fighting needs are met.

You can play a role in conserving water by becoming conscious of the amount of water your household is using, and by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water. Conservation tips include:

- ◆ Automatic dishwashers use 15 gallons for every cycle, regardless of how many dishes are loaded. So get a run for your money and load it to capacity.
- ◆ Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- ◆ Check every faucet in your home for leaks. Just a slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons a day. Fix it up and you can save almost 6,000 gallons per year.
- ◆ Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank, watch for a few minutes to see if the color shows up in the bowl. It is not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons a day from one of these otherwise invisible toilet leaks. Fix it and you save more than 30,000 gallons a year.

CLOSING

Thank you for allowing us to continue to provide your family with quality drinking water this year. In order to maintain a safe and dependable water supply we sometimes need to make improvements that will benefit all of our customers. The costs of these improvements may be reflected in the rate structure. Rate adjustments may be necessary in order to address these improvements. We ask that all our customers help us protect our water sources, which are the heart of our community. Please call our office if you have questions.