2012 Annual Water Quality Report

Fulton County Department of Water Resources
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Atlanta, GA 30303
http://www.fultoncountyga.gov/

Water testing performed from
January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011
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Important information about your drinking water.

Este informe contiene informacion muy importante sobre la calidad de su agua beber. Traduscalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

Help Us Serve You Better

Water quality and safety are sometimes difficult to understand and the information in this brief report may not answer all of your questions. For additional information, questions, or concerns please contact Corlette Banks at (404) 612-8097 during normal business hours. Additional copies of this report are available at your public library.

Front cover artwork courtesy of Christine Jeong, 2012 Water Art Calendar Contest Winner.

Introducing the Department of Water Resources

Our name has changed, but not our commitment to delivering great services. On January 18, 2012, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners approved the 2012 budget which included the restructuring of the General Services and Public Works Departments. The restructuring transfers the Transportation Division of Public Works to General Services. General Services Department has been renamed and will consist of five divisions that include airport operations, building construction, land, maintenance, administration and transportation and logistics. This new entity is the Facility Transportation Services (FTS) Department. The Water Services Division of Public Works has become a stand- alone entity and renamed the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to replace the Department of Public Works. The Department of Water Resources continues to include water distribution, wastewater collection, water reclamation, water supply, stormwater management, and public education and outreach. You may contact us at Director.DWR@fultoncountyga.gov.

The Facts About Drinking Water

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 (800-426-4791).

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:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, that 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 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.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, 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.

Your Opinion Matters

Fulton County Public Works wants to keep the public informed about their drinking water. We believe that informed customers are our best allies, and we are dedicated to giving you the information you need to make knowledgeable decisions. You can participate through public hearings associated with environmental permitting and reviewing of new facilities. Notice of upcoming meetings is posted at the Government Center and on our web site at www.fultoncountyga.gov under “Events.”

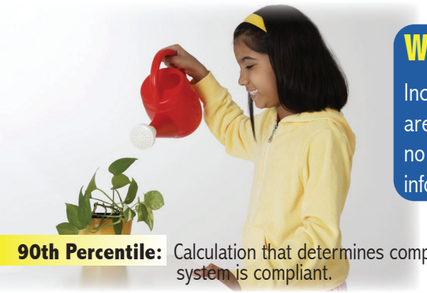
Checking the Connections

The safety and integrity of our drinking water is our top priority at Fulton County. We have programs and ordinances in place to provide you, our customers, with safe, clean, and healthy drinking water. Fulton County Backflow Prevention Program staff works diligently to protect our water distribution system from contamination through uncontrolled illegal connections to the water system from other sources such as wells or chemical tanks. This type of contamination could occur as a result of the reversal of flows brought about by fluctuations in water pressure within the water system due to main breaks, firefighting, etc. To this end, Fulton County has enacted an ordinance making it unlawful to connect any private water pipe, which takes water from any point, well, reservoir, or other source, to pipes which are connected with the water system of the County. Any violation of this ordinance shall be grounds for the permit for the connection from the County’s water service to be immediately revoked, and the water supply shut off until each connection to the private water source is disconnected and removed. For more information about backflow prevention and cross connection control and how individual homeowners can help protect our water system from contamination, contact Jerome Dial by email at jerome.dial@fultoncountyga.gov or by calling 770-410-3421.

Your Water @ a Glance

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/Centers for Disease Control (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 (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. AFCWRC 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



WHAT'S IN OUR WATER?

Included in this report are tables depicting contaminants that have been detected in our water. They are, in all cases, below the levels prescribed by the EPA but, nevertheless, are present. They pose no known health risk at these levels. We have listed a few definitions to help you understand the information in the tables.

90th Percentile: Calculation that determines compliance with the regulation for copper and lead. If this number is less than the action level then the system is compliant.

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

Exemptions: A State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.

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 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 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 microbiological 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 contaminants.

NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit): The unit used to express a measurement of turbidity.

Parts per billion (ppb): One part per billion is the same as one penny in 10 million dollars.

Parts per million (ppm): One part per million is the same as one penny in 10 thousand dollars.

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

Turbidity: Measurement of the cloudiness of the water. It is a good indicator of water quality and effectiveness of disinfectants.

Fulton County Excels

We may take it for granted, but Fulton County's drinking water is one of the many things that makes our region special and adds to our quality of life.Therefore, maintaining excellent water quality is one of our highest priorities. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires an annual water quality report from all community water systems nationwide. Here in Fulton County, we're pleased to share that the quality of our water is excellent, having met or exceeded the standards and requirements set by the EPA.

Additionally, Fulton County received a source water assessment report for our source of drinking water, the Chattahoochee River. The assessment has ranked the Chattahoochee River watershed to have a medium risk of potential pollutant loads. This surface water supply is processed at the Atlanta / Fulton County Water Resources Commission treatment plant located in the city of Johns Creek. The complete report is available for review on our website at http://www.fultoncountyga.gov/pw-water-services/pw-education-a-outreach/2838-annual-drinking-water-quality-reports

EPA Regulated Substances or Contaminate Monitored in the Distribution System

Substance (units)	Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	Highest Level Detected	Range Detected (lowest to highest)	Does water meet EPA standard?	Typical Source
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.78	0.61 – 0.78	YES	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth;
Nitrate (ppm) (measured as Nitrate-Nitrite)	10	10	0.46	N/A	YES	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Substance (units)	EPA Highest Level Allowed (MCL)	Treatment Technique (TT)	Amount Detected	Range detected (lowest to highest amount)	Does water meet EPA standard?	Typical Source
Total Organic Carbon [TOC] (ratio)	TT	TT = > 1	1.56	1.00 – 1.56	YES	Naturally present in the environment
Turbidity (NTU)	TT	TT = 1	0.14	N/A	YES	Soil runoff
	N/A	TT = % samples less than 0.3 NTU	100% (lowest monthly percentage)	N/A	YES	Soil runoff

EPA Regulated Substances or Contaminate Monitored in the Distribution System

Substance (units)	Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)	Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)	Highest Amount Detected	Range Detected (lowest to highest)	Does water meet EPA standard?	Typical Source
Chlorine (ppm)	4	4	1.27	0.23 – 1.27	YES	Water additive used to control microbes
Substance (units)	Action Level (AL) or MCL (90% of the samples collected must be at or below the AL)	Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	90th percentile (90% of samples taken were below this amount)	# of samples above action level (AL) (No more than 5 samples above AL allowed)	Does water meet EPA standard? Typical Source	Typical Source
Copper (ppb) (collected in November 2009)	1300	1300	93	0 out 50 samples taken	YES	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits;
Lead (ppb) (collected in November 2009)	15	0	2.5	0 out 50 samples taken	YES	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits;
Substance (units)	Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	Highest Number of Positive Samples Reported	% Positive Samples in the Total Number of Samples Collected	Does water meet EPA standard?	Typical Source
Total Coliform (% positive samples in total # of samples collected per month	5% of monthly samples are positive	0	1	0.83	YES	Naturally present in the environment
Fecal Coliform or E. coli bacteria (# of positive samples)	0	0	0	N/A	YES	Human or animal fecal waste
Substance (units)	Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	Highest Level Detected Average	Range Detected (lowest to highest)	Does water meet EPA standard?	Typical Source
Haloacetic Acid HAA5 (ppb)	60	N/A	25.7	18.0 – 36.0	YES	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Trihalomethane TTHM (ppb)	80	N/A	35.5	22.2 – 41.8	YES	By-product of drinking water chlorination

Waivers (exemptions) were extended to the County by the State in 2011 through 2013 for the following contaminants: Arsenic, Asbestos, Cyanide, Radium and Synthetic Organic Compounds. Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOCs) are man made products such as pesticides, gasoline components, PCB (polychlorinated bi-phenyls; formerly used in rubber, dyes, heaters, etc), phenols, and dioxin.

Dollars and Cents: The Value of Your Water

All life depends on water; therefore the quality of our water is very important to everyone. We generally pay much less for our drinking water than we do for most other goods and services, such as cable television, telephone service, and electricity. On average, tap water costs are slightly more than $1.50 per 1,000 gallons. At that price, a gallon of water costs less than one penny. Although extremely cheap, water is not free. Your water bill pays for a lot more than simply water. Treatment accounts for about 15 percent of that cost. Other costs are for equipment (such as the treatment plants and distribution systems), and labor for operation and maintenance of the system. Yet think about how important water is to our daily lives. All things considered, your tap water remains one of the best bargains around.