

A high-speed photograph of water splashing, creating a dynamic and refreshing background. The water is captured in mid-air, with numerous droplets and a large, turbulent splash at the bottom. The color is a deep, clear blue.

# ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

REPORTING YEAR 2019

***Presented By***



**Town of Uxbridge Water Division**

## Our Mission Continues

We are once again pleased to present our annual water quality report covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2019.

Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to producing drinking water that meets all state and federal standards. We continually strive to adopt new methods for delivering the best-quality drinking water to you. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, we remain vigilant in meeting the goals of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users.

Please remember that we are always available should you ever have any questions or concerns about your water.

## Water Conservation Tips

You can play a role in conserving water and save yourself money in the process 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. Here are a few tips:

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 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 an invisible toilet leak. Fix it and you save more than 30,000 gallons a year.

Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Simply turn off all taps and water-using appliances. Then check the meter after 15 minutes. If it moved, you have a leak.

## Lead in Home Plumbing

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. We are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but we 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 at (800) 426-4791 or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

## Source Water Assessment and Protection Report

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) completed an assessment of Uxbridge water sources and prepared a report that documents specific threats, such as underground storage tanks, auto repair shops, and transportation corridors. It also recommends actions we can take to protect our water supply. DEP has assessed our susceptibility as high, based on the presence of at least one high-threat land use in our water supply protection areas. It is important to understand that this susceptibility rating does not imply poor water quality, only the system's potential to become contaminated within the assessment area.

This Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) report is available at the DEP's Central Office in Worcester or online at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/drinking/swap/cero/2304000.pdf>

## Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population.

Immunocompromised persons such as those with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, those 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. EPA/CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) 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 or

<http://water.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.



## WHOM TO CONTACT?

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about this report or for all general problems concerning leaks, meters, hydrants, or mains, call James Boliver at the Water Division at (508) 278-8631 (Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.) or send email to [jboliver@uxbridge-ma.gov](mailto:jboliver@uxbridge-ma.gov).

**EMERGENCY:** For emergency service after business hours, please call the Uxbridge Police at (508) 278-7755.

**BILLING AND INFORMATION:** For billing, final readings, and other customer service questions, please call the Department of Public Works (DPW) Office at (508) 278-8616.

This report will be posted in the Uxbridge Town Hall, on the Town's web site ([www.uxbridge-ma.gov](http://www.uxbridge-ma.gov)), and at the Uxbridge Public Library. Extra copies will also be available in the DPW Office located at 147 Hecla Street.



## Manganese in Drinking Water

Manganese is a naturally occurring mineral found in rocks, soil, groundwater, and surface water. Manganese is necessary for proper nutrition and is part of a healthy diet, but can have undesirable effects on certain sensitive populations at elevated concentrations. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and MassDEP have set an aesthetics-based Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) for manganese of 50 ug/L (microgram per liter), or 50 parts per billion. In addition, MassDEP's Office of Research and Standards (ORS) has set a drinking water guideline for manganese (ORSG), which closely follows the EPA public health advisory for manganese. Drinking water may naturally have manganese and, when concentrations are greater than 50 ppb, the water may be discolored and taste bad. Over a lifetime, the EPA recommends that people limit their consumption of water with manganese levels less than 300 ppb and over the short term, EPA recommends that people limit their consumption of water with levels over 1000 ppb, primarily due to concerns about possible neurological effects. Children younger than one year old should not be given water with manganese concentrations over 300 ppb, nor should formula for infants be made with that water for more than a total of ten days throughout the year. The ORSG differs from the EPA's health advisory because it expands the age group to which a lower manganese concentration applies from children less than six months of age to children up to one year of age to address concerns about children's susceptibility to manganese toxicity.

## Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) prescribe regulations limiting 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. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

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. Substances 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, or wildlife;

Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring 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 may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems;

Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## 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 when 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.



## Test Results

Our water is monitored for many different kinds of substances on a very strict sampling schedule. Also, the water we deliver must meet specific health standards. Here, we show only 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 often than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

We participated in the 4th stage of the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR4) program by performing additional tests on our drinking water. UCMR4 sampling benefits the environment and public health by providing the EPA with data on the occurrence of contaminants suspected to be in drinking water, in order to determine if the EPA needs to introduce new regulatory standards to improve drinking water quality. Unregulated contaminant monitoring data are 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
<b>Alpha Emitters</b> (pCi/L)	2016	15	0	1.82	ND–3.4	No	Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Barium</b> (ppm)	2017	2	2	0.036	0.021–0.036	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Beta/Photon Emitters<sup>1</sup></b> (pCi/L)	2016	50	0	33.14	28.7–39.2	No	Decay of natural and man-made deposits
<b>Chlorine</b> (ppm)	2019	[4]	[4]	0.97	0.63–1.24	No	Water additive used to control microbes
<b>Haloacetic Acids [HAAs]</b> (ppb)	2019	60	NA	5.8	3.9–8.5	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
<b>Nitrate</b> (ppm)	2019	10	10	0.9	0.36–1.4	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Perchlorate</b> (ppb)	2017	2	NA	0.13	ND–0.013	No	Inorganic chemicals used as oxidizers in solid propellants for rockets, missiles, fireworks, and explosives
<b>TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes]</b> (ppb)	2019	80	NA	19.25	12–26	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection

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)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
<b>Copper</b> (ppm)	2018	1.3	1.3	0.199	0/30	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Lead</b> (ppb)	2018	15	0	2.5	1/30	No	Lead services lines; Corrosion of household plumbing systems including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits



## SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Manganese (ppb)	2019	50	NA	151	ND–371	No	Leaching from natural deposits
Total Dissolved Solids [TDS] (ppm)	2019	500	NA	293	210–450	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits

## UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES <sup>2</sup>

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Chloroform (ppb)	2018	13	2.1–13	From chemical companies and paper mills; Also found in drinking water to which chlorine has been added
Sodium <sup>3</sup> (ppm)	2017	61	27–61	Naturally occurring common element found in soil and water; Runoff from seasonal road treatment
Sulfate (ppm)	2018	14	6.5–14	Naturally occurring mineral found in soil and rock formations that contain groundwater

## UNREGULATED CONTAMINANT MONITORING RULE - PART 4 (UCMR4) <sup>2</sup>

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Bromide (ppb)	2019	48.85	28.7–66.5	Naturally occurring compound
Bromodichloroacetic Acid (ppb)	2019	1.71	0.622–2.88	Disinfection by-product
Chlorodibromoacetic Acid (ppb)	2019	1.0	0.762–1.38	Disinfection by-product
Dichloroacetic Acid (ppb)	2019	1.37	0.237–3.49	Disinfection by-product
HAA5 (ppb)	2019	4.44	1.45–10	Disinfection by-product
HAA6Br (ppb)	2019	5.87	2.30–9.49	Disinfection by-product
HAA9 (ppb)	2019	8.13	2.54–16.1	Disinfection by-product
Monobromoacetic Acid (ppb)	2019	0.529	ND–0.661	Disinfection by-product
Total Organic Carbon [TOC] (ppb)	2019	784.5	538–1,710	Form of disinfection by-product

<sup>1</sup>The MCL for beta particles is 4 mrem/year. The U.S. EPA considers 50 pCi/L to be the level of concern for beta particles.

<sup>2</sup>Unregulated contaminants are those for which the U.S. EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist U.S. EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

<sup>3</sup>The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection maintains a guideline level of 20 ppm for sodium.

## Definitions

**90th %ile:** Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level. This number is compared to the Action Level to determine lead and copper compliance.

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

**LRAA (Locational Running Annual Average):** The average of sample analytical results for samples taken at a particular monitoring location during the previous four calendar quarters. Amount Detected values for TTHMs and HAAs are reported as the highest LRAAs.

**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.

**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.

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

**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.

## How Is My Water Treated and Purified?

The treatment process consists of a series of steps. First, raw water is drawn from our water sources and treated with potassium hydroxide. This chemical is used for pH adjustment and as a corrosion inhibitor (to protect distribution pipes and household plumbing). A polyphosphate is also added to sequester the iron and manganese that naturally occur in groundwater throughout New England. Sodium hypochlorite is then added as a disinfectant. All listed chemical treatments are conducted by trained licensed water operators. Finally, the water is pumped into the High Street underground reservoir and to the water tank on Richardson Street. The final destination from the storage tanks is your home or business. Uxbridge does not currently treat the water with fluoride.

## Where Does My Water Come From?

The Town of Uxbridge customers receive their water from three groundwater sources containing a total of seven gravel packed wells. The Blackstone Wellfield is located at the Water Division Office on Blackstone Street. The second source is the Bernat Wellfield, located on town-owned property on the east side of South Main Street. The Rosenfeld Well is located on Quaker Highway. All wellfields are replenished from various underground sources.

Please help protect your investment by monitoring land use near these wellfields and reporting any activities to the Water Division.

To learn more about our watershed on the Internet, go to the U.S. EPA's Surf Your Watershed at [www.epa.gov/surf](http://www.epa.gov/surf).