

2000 City of Port Townsend Drinking Water Report

Water Sources

Water for the City of Port Townsend is surface water that comes from the Big and Little Quilcene Rivers in the northeast corner of the Olympic National Forest. This water is stored in Lords Lake Reservoir, northwest of Quilcene, and City Lake Reservoir, at the south end of Discovery Bay.

The City and Forest Service have cooperated in a joint effort to protect and enhance this important resource for over 70 years. In 1993 the Cooperative Watershed Protection Program for the Big and Little Quilcene Municipal Watershed assessed the source water and outlined additional programs to protect it. This document is available for review at the City library. By minimizing opportunities for contaminants to enter at the water's source, we have continued to meet the stringent criteria required for remaining an unfiltered surface water system.

Reporting

To comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments, the City of Port Townsend is issuing an annual report on water quality monitoring performed during the past year. The purpose of the report is to educate consumers about their drinking water and the need to protect this precious resource.

Potential Contaminants

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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

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.

Contaminants that may be present in the source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses, protozoans, and bacteria, which may come from wildlife and people visiting the watershed.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from stormwater runoff.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as forestry management and stormwater runoff.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which can come from stormwater runoff.
- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Port Townsend Annual Water Quality Analysis (1999)

The EPA regulates monitoring of over 80 contaminants. The ones listed in the following tables are the only contaminants detected in your drinking water during the 1999 calendar year. Presence of these contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Data presented in this table is from testing done January 1- December 31, 1999. The State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year.

Organic Chemical Contaminants	MCL	MCLG	Port Townsend Water	Range of Detections	Violation	Typical Source of Contaminant
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)	100	n/a	38	33-63	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination

The maximum contaminant level for total trihalomethanes is 100 parts per billion. The average level detected in Port Townsend's water was 38 and the highest level detected was 63 parts per billion. Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

	MCL	MCLG	Port Townsend Water	Range of Detections	Violation	Typical Source of Contaminant
Turbidity (NTU)	TT=5NTU	n/a	2.67	0.14-2.67	No	Soil runoff

Port Townsend's water turbidity varied from 0.14 to 2.67 NTUs. The maximum contaminant level for turbidity is 5 NTUs. Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality. High turbidity can hinder the effectiveness of disinfectants.

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/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 (1-800-426-4791).

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 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.

n/a: Not applicable

ppb: Parts per billion or micrograms per liter.

NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Units - a measure of the cloudiness of the water.

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

Public Comment

The public is invited to participate in decisions that affect drinking water through the City of Port Townsend Utility Committee. Information about scheduled meeting is available from the City Administration at 385-3000.

More Information

The City of Port Townsend's water meets or exceeds all EPA and State drinking water health standards. We are happy to answer any questions you may have about our drinking water. Please call the Port Townsend Department of Water Quality at 379-5001.