



**2003 Annual**  
*Water Quality*  
**Report**

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Water Quality Management Division



City of Tucson  
Tucson Water  
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# Contaminants Detected in Our Drinking Water

Tucson Water regularly samples the drinking water that is delivered to you. Much of this testing is required by drinking water regulations. In addition to this required monitoring, we perform a great deal of discretionary monitoring in order to provide both Tucson Water staff and customers with additional information.

The Detected Contaminants Table below lists all contaminants that were detected in both the required and discretionary drinking water monitoring. Two inorganic contaminants of special interest are arsenic and fluoride, which are naturally occurring. For more information, please see the table and the specific explanations, which follow the table.

It is important to remember that the detection of a contaminant in drinking water does not necessarily

represent a threat to public health. Current technology allows water utilities to detect extremely low levels of contaminants in drinking water. A detected result means a concentration that is above the minimum value that can be measured by the laboratory.

In most cases, the minimum detectable level of a contaminant is well below the USEPA regulatory limit for that contaminant. To compare the detected amount with the amount allowed by the USEPA, refer to the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) column in the table. The vast majority of regulated contaminants were not detectable in drinking water delivered by Tucson Water. The non-detected results were not included in the table. For a complete list of all USEPA regulated contaminants contact the USEPA at 1-800-426-4791 or visit the USEPA website at [www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html#mcls](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html#mcls).

## Detected Contaminants Table

Contaminant	Analysis Date	Maximum Result	Range	MCL	MCLG	Major Sources
<i>Inorganics</i>						
Nitrate (as N)	2003	1.7 ppm	1.7 – 1.7 ppm	10 ppm	10 ppm	Natural deposits; septic tanks; agriculture; sewage
<i>Radiochemical</i>						
Adjusted Gross Alpha Uranium	2003	3.2 pCi/L	3.2 – 3.2 pCi/L	15 pCi/L	None	Natural deposits
	2003	4.7 ppb	4.7 – 4.7 ppb	30 ppb	0 ppb	Natural deposits

Contaminant	Analysis Date	No. of Samples Above the Action Level	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Value	Action Level	MCLG	Major Sources
<i>Lead and Copper in Standing Water Samples</i>						
Lead	2003	none	< 2 ppb	15 ppb	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Copper	2003	none	0.18 ppm	1.3 ppm	1.3 ppm	Corrosion of household plumbing systems

## Definitions of Technical and Regulatory Terms

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

**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. If a contaminant is believed to cause health concerns in humans, then the MCL is set as close as practical to zero and at an acceptable level of risk. Generally, the maximum acceptable risk of cancer is 1 in 10,000 with 70 years of exposure.

**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.

**Parts Per Billion (ppb).** Some constituents in water are measured in very small units. Organic compounds such as trihalomethanes are monitored by Tucson Water in terms of parts per billion (or micrograms per liter). To help you visualize how very small this unit is, we offer the following illustrations. One part per billion equals: One second of time in 31.7 years or the first 16 inches of a trip to the moon.

**Parts Per Million (ppm).** Many dissolved minerals such as sodium and calcium are monitored by Tucson Water in terms of parts per million (or milligrams per liter). To help you visualize how very small this unit is, we offer the following illustrations. One part per million equals: 2 ounces of water in a typical 15,000 gallon backyard swimming pool or one second of time in 11.6 days.

**Picocurie Per Liter (pCi/L).** The quantity of radioactive material in one liter which produces 2.22 nuclear disintegrations per minute.

# Expected Drinking Water Contaminants

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. Tucson's groundwater contains dissolved minerals and organic compounds, which have been leached from rocks, sediments, and plant minerals through which the water traveled. One would expect to find beneficial minerals such as calcium and magnesium, harmless minerals such as chloride, bicarbonate, and sulfate, and metals such as iron, copper, arsenic, and lead, which may be either beneficial or harmless at low concentrations, but harmful at high concentrations. In addition to these naturally occurring contaminants, groundwater may contain contaminants resulting from human, industrial, or domestic activities. For this reason, water utilities must currently monitor for approximately 90 regulated and 12 unregulated contaminants.

The following language is required by the USEPA to appear in this report, some of which may not be applicable to deep groundwater wells, the source of the this Water supply:

Contaminants that may be present in a source water can include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage, agricultural livestock, 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 byproducts 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, USEPA regulations limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. Bottled water may come from either a surface water source or groundwater source, and may be treated minimally or extensively. For information on the quality of your bottled water, contact the water bottling company.

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## Detail Information on Detected Contaminants

**Nitrate** is a form of nitrogen and an important plant nutrient. Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Tucson water performs extra monitoring on wells high in nitrate for extra assurance that action can be taken when approaching the MCL.

(Nitrate result for this system was 1.7 ppm.)

**Adjusted Gross Alpha** is a measure of radioactivity due to naturally occurring minerals in groundwater. The MCL for gross alpha radioactivity is set at 15 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). This excludes the radioactivity contributed by either radon or uranium. (The adjusted gross Alpha result for this system was 3.2 pCi/L.)

**Uranium** is a heavy metal, which is highly toxic and radioactive. The USEPA has set a new standard of 30 ppb for uranium, which water systems must have met by December 2003. (The uranium result for this system was 4.7 ppb.)

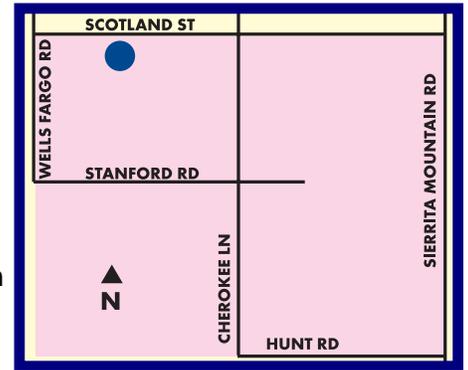
**Lead and Copper** are naturally occurring metals, which are generally found at very low levels in some waters. However, these levels can increase when water contacts plumbing materials containing lead pipe, lead soldered copper tubing, or brass. Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. While Tucson Water is well within standards, concerned customers can take an extra precaution to protect children from lead leached from new brass faucets by running the water for a few seconds and using the water for something other than drinking. This is especially important if the water has been sitting in the pipes for a few hours or more. These same precautions also help to give you a better-tasting water.

During 2003, Tucson Water ensured that your drinking water met all drinking water standards.

Tucson Water is pleased to provide you with this Annual Water Quality Report. The publishing of this report is required annually by the Safe Drinking Water Act and State of Arizona regulations. This report will also serve as a reference with important information on the quality of water we deliver and will provide you with contacts and phone numbers you may need from time to time.

## Sierrita Foothills Landowners Water System

Tucson Water acquired and assumed operation of this new system on April 30, 2003. This is a small community by the Three Points area, with 28 services serving approximately 85 people. G-010A is the sole source of water for this system. The well and equipment, the storage tank, and the boosters had significant mechanical upgrades in 2003.



## How is Our Drinking Water Treated?

The groundwater delivered by Tucson Water meets all drinking water standards without treatment. However, approximately 0.8 parts per million (ppm) of chlorine is added to the drinking water supply to provide assurance that water delivered to customers will remain free of microbiological contamination. This also ensures that the water meets microbiological drinking water standards from the time it is pumped from the ground until it reaches the customer's tap.

### Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP):

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has completed a source water assessment of this Isolated System, which evaluates the risk of contamination from human activities. The water sources for this system are categorized as "low risk of contamination from human activities".

## A Special Note to At-Risk Populations

While the Safe Drinking Water Act regulations are intended to protect consumers throughout their lifetime, some people may be more vulnerable to infections from drinking water than the general population. These "at-risk" populations include: immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, and in some cases, elderly people and infants. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water hotline.

## Whom Do I Contact for More Information?

For more information on this Tucson Water report contact Tom Jefferson or Mohsen Belyani with the Water Quality Management Division. Call 791-5252 or e-mail your questions to: [tom.jefferson@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:tom.jefferson@tucsonaz.gov) or [mohsen.belyani@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:mohsen.belyani@tucsonaz.gov).

Additional information is also available from the Tucson Water Website: [www.cityoftucson.org/water/](http://www.cityoftucson.org/water/)

United States Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791

USEPA Website: [www.epa.gov/safewater/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/)

City of Tucson TTY#: 791-2639

## Telephone Numbers:

Tucson Water Quality automated phone line	791-4227
Tucson Water Public Information Office	791-4331
Tucson Water Quality Management Division	791-5252
Tucson Water Customer Advocate	791-5945
Tucson Water Customer Service/Billing	791-3242
Tucson Water 24-Hour Emergency	791-4133

Si usted desea este documento escrito en español, por favor, llame al 791-4331.