

# *2007 Annual Water Quality Report*

## *Water Quality Management Division*



*During 2007, Tucson Water ensured that your drinking water met all drinking water standards*

This Annual Water Quality Report provides information on your drinking water. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires that all drinking water suppliers provide a water quality report to their customers on an annual basis. This report also serves as a reference with important information on the quality of water and with contacts and phone numbers you may need from time to time.

### **Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP)**

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has completed a source water assessment of this 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".

### **How is my drinking water treated?**

The groundwater delivered by Tucson Water meets all drinking water standards without treatment. However, approximately 0.8 to 1.0 ppm of chlorine residual is maintained in 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.



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



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Tucson Water  
P.O. Box 27210  
Tucson, AZ  
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**Silverbell West System**  
 is a small water system serving approximately 90 homes. The system is served by a new well, W-001B, which was completed and has served this system since August of 2005.

**WHY ARE THERE CONTAMINANTS IN MY DRINKING WATER?**

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 travels. 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 25 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 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.

**WERE THERE ANY CONTAMINANTS DETECTED IN MY 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, Tucson Water conducts discretionary monitoring in order to provide both Tucson Water staff and customers with additional Water quality information.

The Detected Contaminants Table on page 3 lists all contaminants that were detected in the required drinking water monitoring. For more information, please see the table and the specific explanations, which follow the table.

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).

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.

## DETECTED CONTAMINANTS TABLE

Contaminant	Analysis Date	Maximum Result	Range	MCL	MCLG	Major Sources
<b>Inorganics</b>						
Arsenic	2007	5.7 ppb	5.7 – 5.7 ppb	10 ppb	None	Natural deposits
Barium	2007	0.047 ppm	0.047 - 0.047 ppm	2 ppm	2 ppm	Natural deposits
Fluoride	2007	0.48 ppm	0.42 - 0.48 ppm	4 ppm	4 ppm	Natural deposits
Nitrate (as N)	2007	5.6 ppm	4.8 – 5.6 ppm	10 ppm	10 ppm	Natural deposits; septic tanks; agriculture; sewage
Sodium	2007	85 ppm	85 – 85 ppm	None	None	Natural deposits
<b>Radiochemical</b>						
Adjusted Gross Alpha	2006	1 pCi/L	0.3 – 1 pCi/L	15 pCi/L	0 pCi/L	Natural deposits
Uranium	2006	9.7 ppb	8.3 – 9.7 ppb	30 ppb	None	Natural deposits
<b>Synthetic Organics</b>						
Simazine	2007	0.06 ppb	0.06 – 0.06 ppb	4 ppb	4 ppb	Herbicide
<b>Trihalomethane or Constituent</b>						
Bromoform	2007	1.7 ppb	1.7- 1.7 ppb		0 ppb	By-product of chlorination
Chlorodibrommethanes	2007	1.1 ppb	1.1- 1.1 ppb		0 ppb	By-product of chlorination
Total Trihalomethanes (THMs)	2007	2.8 ppb	2.8 – 2.8 ppb	80 ppb	None	By-product of chlorination
Contaminant	Analysis Date	# of Samples Above the Action Level	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Value	Action Level	MCLG	Major Sources
<b>Lead and Copper in Standing Water Samples</b>						
Lead	2007	None	2.0 ppb	15 ppb	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Copper	2007	None	0.05 ppm	1.3 ppm	1.3 ppm	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
<b>Maximum Residual Disinfection Level (MRDL)</b>						
Disinfectant	Annual Chlorine Running Average	Monthly Average Range	MRDL	MCLG	Major Sources of Contaminant	
Chlorine	0.70 ppm	0.41 – 1.25 ppm	4 ppm	4 ppm	Disinfection additive used to control microbes	

## DRINKING WATER TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**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.

**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 contaminants.

**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.



## Detail Information on Detected Contaminants

**Arsenic** USEPA has finalized a reduction in the arsenic drinking water standard from 50 ppb to 10 ppb. All water utilities were required to have met this new standard by January 2006. While your drinking water meets EPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. USEPA's new standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. USEPA continues to research the health effect of low levels of arsenic which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damages and circulatory problems.

**Barium** occurs naturally at very low concentrations in our groundwater.

**Fluoride** is an important naturally-occurring mineral that helps to form healthy teeth and bones. A concentration of 1 ppm is considered optimum. At concentrations above 2 ppm, fluoride can cause mild discoloration of teeth, and exposure at above the MCL of 4 ppm can cause both severe discoloration of teeth and over many years of exposure, bone disease.

**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.

**Sodium** is the sixth most abundant element on Earth and is widely distributed in soils, plants, water, and food. A goal of 2.4 g/day dietary sodium has been proposed by several government and health agencies. Drinking water containing between 30 and 60 ppm would contribute only 2.5% to 5% of the dietary goal if tap water consumption is 2 L/day. Currently, there is no MCL for sodium in drinking water. The recommended EPA guidance level for individuals on a very low sodium diet (500 mg/day) is 20 ppm in drinking water.

**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.

**Uranium** is a heavy metal, which is highly toxic and radioactive. The MCL for uranium is 30 ppb.

**Synthetic Organics** Unlike Volatile Organics which rapidly migrate through soils to groundwater, Synthetic Organics are generally less mobile. In 2007, a very small amount of Simazine was detected in this system. Simazine is a herbicide used to control broad leaved and grassy weeds on a variety of deep-rooted crops and also corn.

**Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)** are formed when chlorine combines with naturally-occurring material in water. Because the level of organic matter in our groundwater is extremely low, these compounds are found at very low concentrations.

**Lead and Copper** are naturally occurring metals, which are generally found at very low levels in source waters. 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. Tucson Water is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but can not 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 <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

**Total Chlorine Residual** Approximately 0.8 to 1.0 ppm of chlorine is maintained in 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. Total Chlorine Residual is measured from sample stations where the bacteriological samples are collected monthly. The Total Annual Chlorine Residual is calculated using the monthly average chlorine for the past 12 months.

### HOW IS MY DRINKING WATER TREATED?

The groundwater delivered by Tucson Water meets all drinking water standards without treatment. However, approximately 0.8 to 1.0 ppm of chlorine residual is maintained in 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.

### WHOM DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

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

#### Telephone Numbers:

Tucson Water Public Information Office	791-4331
Tucson Water Quality Management Division	791-5252
Tucson Water Customer Service/Billing	791-3242
Tucson Water 24 hour Emergency	791-4133

#### Additional Information:

Tucson Water Website:	<a href="http://www.tucsonaz.gov/water/">www.tucsonaz.gov/water/</a>
United States Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Hotline:	1-800-426-4791
USEPA Website: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/safewater/">www.epa.gov/safewater/</a>	
City of Tucson TTY#:	791-2639