2001 WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR THE HIGHFIELD WATER SYSTEM

Is my water safe?

Last year, as in years past, your tap water met all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state drinking water health standards. The Washington County Water and Sewer Department vigilantly safeguards its water supplies and once again we are proud to report that our system has never violated a maximum contaminant level or any other water quality standard.

Do I need to take special precautions?

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).

Where does my water come from?

The Highfield Water System utilizes four wells as its primary water source. This water is pH adjusted and chlorinated prior to entering the distribution system. During periods of low water table conditions, water can be purchased from the Washington Township Municipal Authority. Washington Township Municipal Authority uses three springs and three wells as their water source. No water was purchased from Washington Township Municipal Authority in 2000 and in 2001.

Source water assessment and its availability

The Maryland Department of the Environment has developed and EPA has approved its plan for the development of Source Water Assessments. MDE plans to complete the assessment process by May 2003. We will continue to keep you updated on the status of the Assessment Plan in this section of the report.

Why are there contaminants in my 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 (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

How can I get involved?

The Washington County Water and Sewer Department has an Advisory Board that meets on a monthly basis. For more information on attending one of these meetings, please contact our main office at (240) 313-2600.

Results of voluntary monitoring

The Washington County Water and Sewer Department conducts routine testing on your water system that is not included in the Water Quality Data Table. A list of these parameters and their results are listed in the Table of Results of Customer Interest below.

TABLE OF TEST RESULTS OF CUSTOMER INTEREST

PARAMETER	LEVEL/RANGE DETECTED	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT
pH	6.6 TO 8.2	Standard Units
Chlorine	0.2 TO 1.3	ppm
Turbidity	0.1 TO 0.6	NTU
Hardness	2 TO 107	ppm
Alkalinty	30 TO 200	ppm

Water Quality Data Table

The table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the calendar year of this report. The presence of contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done in the calendar year of the report. The EPA or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently.

Contaminants (units)	MCLG	MCL	Your Water	Range Low	Range High	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Inorganic Contaminants								
Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen] (ppm)	10	10	1.89	0.2	1.89	05/15/2001	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)	MNR	MNR	44.9	9.3	44.9	03/28/2001	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching
Synthetic organic contaminants including pesticides and herbicides								
Di (2-ethylhexyl) adipate (ppb)	400	400	1.5	NA		10/01/2001	No	Discharge from chemical factories
Unregulated Contaminants								
Sulfate (ppm)	NA	NA	28.9	3.1	28.9	02/10/1998	No	
Volatile Organic Contaminants								
Tetrachloroethylene (ppb)	0	5	1.8	NA	1.8	09/28/2001	No	Discharge from factories and dry cleaners

Contaminant(s) (units)	MCLG	AL	Your Water	# of Samples > AL	Sample Date	Exceeds AL	Typical Source
Inorganic Contaminants							
Copper (ppm)	1.3	1.3	0.38	0	12/31/2000	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives; Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Lead (ppb)	0	15	14	0	12/31/2000	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

Units Description:

NA: Not applicable
ND: Not detected
NR: Not reported
MNR: Monitoring not required, but recommended.
ppm: parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)
ppb: parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

Important Drinking Water Definitions:

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.

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.

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

MRDLG: Maximum residual disinfection 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.

MRDL: Maximum residual disinfectant level. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial

contaminants.

Other Educational Information

Lead

Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested and flush your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using tap water. Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Results of radon monitoring

On May 18, 1999, the Maryland Department of the Environment tested for Radon in Highfield Well and on October 22, 2001 MDE tested the Pennersville Well. The results for the Highfield well were 30 pCi/L and the results of the Pennersville Well were 2,415 pCi/L. Radon is a radioactive gas that you can't see, taste, or smell. It is found throughout the U.S. Radon can move up through the ground and into a home through cracks and holes in the foundation. Radon can build up to high levels in all types of homes. Radon can also get into indoor air when released from tap water from showering, washing dishes, and other household activities. Compared to radon entering the home through soil, radon entering the home through tap water will in most cases be a small source of radon in indoor air. Radon is a known human carcinogen. Breathing air containing radon can lead to lung cancer. Drinking water containing radon may also cause increased risk of stomach cancer. If you are concerned about radon in your home, test the air in your home. Testing is inexpensive and easy. Fix your home if the level of radon in your air is 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L) or higher. There are simple ways to fix a radon problem that aren't too costly. For additional information, call your state radon program or call EPA's Radon Hotline (800-SOS-RADON).

What levels of Radon in my water should I be concerned about?

There are currently no federally enforced drinking water standards for Radon. EPA is proposing to regulate radon in drinking water from community water supplies (water systems that serve 25 or more year-round residents). EPA proposed the rule in October 1999 and plans to finalize it in the fall of 2003.

EPA is proposing to require community water suppliers to provide water with radon levels no higher than 4,000 pCi/L, which contributes about 0.4 pCi/L to the air in your home. This requirement assumes that the STATE is also taking action to reduce levels in indoor air by developing EPA approved, enhanced State radon indoor air programs. (Called Multimedia Mitigation Programs). This is because most of the Radon you breathe comes from the soil under your home. This option gives the States flexibility to focus on the greatest problems, by encouraging the public to fix radon in indoor air problems and homes that keep radon from entering.

For States that choose not to develop enhanced indoor programs, community water systems in that State will be required to reduce radon in drinking water to 300 pCi/L. This amount of radon contributes 0.03 pCi/L of radon in the air in your home. Even if a State does not develop the enhanced indoor air program, water systems may choose to develop their own local indoor radon program and meet a radon standard for drinking water of 4,000 pCi/L.

EPA has set up this option, under the framework specified in the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, so that the overall risks from exposure to radon, both through air and water are reduced.

For more information on the Washington County Water and Sewer Department, please visit our website at www.wc-link.org/wcwsd

For more information contact:
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