

Colchester Sewer and Water Commission

2013 Annual Water-Quality Report

Dear Customer: We are pleased to present a summary of the quality of the water provided to you during the past year. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires that utilities issue an annual “Consumer Confidence” report to customers in addition to other notices that may be required by law.

The bottom line: Is the water safe to drink? We are proud to report that the water provided by the Colchester Sewer and Water Commission meets or exceeds all current federal and state drinking water standards.

As a public water system, we perform monitoring for certain “contaminants”. Some contaminants are monitored continuously while others are tested for on weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or multi-year basis depending on criteria established by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH). When a contaminant exists above a detectable level, it is reported in the table below. In testing for over 100 contaminants, only 15 were detected, and all were found at levels well below the State limits.

This report is a snapshot of last year’s water quality. Included are details of; where our water comes from, what it contains, and the risks our water testing and treatment are designed to prevent. The Colchester Sewer and Water Commission is committed to providing you with a safe and reliable water supply. Informed consumers are our best allies in maintaining safe drinking water.

We encourage public interest and participation in our community’s decisions affecting drinking water. Regular Commission meetings occur on the second Thursday of each month, at Colchester Town Hall at 7:00 pm. The public is welcome. Find out more about Colchester Sewer and Water Commission on the Internet at www.colchesterct.gov.

Overview

In 2013, the Colchester Water Department hired a contractor to clean and recoat the inside of the two water storage tanks located on Elmwood Heights, to ensure the highest quality drinking water is being delivered to our customers. Approximately 2,500ft of 12” water main and a 6” force main was installed on South Main Street to connect the new state DOT garage and Tractor Supply. Staff continues to explore different parcels throughout town looking for a new source location.

Water Source

Water supplied to the Town’s municipal water users comes from a series of groundwater wells.

What does the following table mean?

The table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that were detected, even in the most minute traces, during 2013. If, due to testing frequency regulations, certain contaminants were not tested for in 2013, but were present in the most recent prior test year, that date is shown. The table contains the name of each substance, the highest level allowed by regulation (MCL), the ideal goals for public health (MCLG), the amount detected, the usual sources of such contamination, footnotes explaining our findings, and a key to units of measurement. Definitions of MCL and MCLG are important and are further defined below. The Detected Level is the highest level detected in the sampling sequence. The Detected Range represents the lowest and highest levels detected during multiple sampling sequences. A narrow range represents a relatively consistent condition whereas a wide range may represent a single condition or a spike in the readings. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentration of these contaminants do not change frequently.

Maximum Contaminant Level or 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 or 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.

Key to Table

AL = Action Level
MFL = million fibers per liter
Pci/L = Pico curies per liter (a measure of radioactivity)
ppb = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter
ppq = parts per quadrillion, or picograms per liter
n/a = not applicable; a MCL or MCLG has not been set

MCL = Maximum Contaminant Level
MCLG = Maximum Contaminant Level Goal
NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Level Units
Mrem/year = millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)
ppm = parts per million, or mg/L
ppt = parts per trillion, or nanograms per liter
TT = Treatment Technique

Contaminant	Date Tested	Unit	MCL	MCLG	Detected Level	Detected Range	Major Sources	Violation
Inorganic Contaminant								
Lead*(90 th percentile)	7/26/2011	mg/L	AL=.015	AL=.015	.0095	0.001-0.0095	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits	no
Copper(90 th percentile)	7/26/2011	Ppm	AL=1.3	AL=1.3	0.031	0.0016-0.082	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits	no
Sulfate	10/08/2013	mg/L	250	n/a	28	28	erosion of natural deposits	no
Barium	10/08/2013	mg/L	2	2	0.014	0.014	erosion of natural deposits	no
Chromium	10/08/2013	mg/L	0.1	0.1	<0.005	<0.005	erosion of natural deposits	no
sodium	10/08/2013	Ppm	n/a	n/a	37	37	residual in aquifer from state DOT road salt use, erosion of natural deposits	no
chloride	7/15/2013	mg/L	250	n/a	31	31	residual in aquifer from state DOT road salt use, erosion of natural deposits	no
nickel	10/08/2013	mg/L	n/a	n/a	0.0011	0.0011	erosion of natural deposits	no
Microbiological Contaminants								
Turbidity	12/09/13	NTU	5	n/a	<0.01	<0.01	fine sediment in aquifer pumping zone	no
Coliform Bacteria	12/09/13	col/100ml	0	0	Absent	Absent	warm blooded animals fecal matter and other micro organisms	no
Nitrates/Nitrites								
nitrites	7/16/2013	mg/L	1	0	<0.05	<0.05	runoff from fertilizer use	no
nitrates	7/16/2013	mg/L	10	0	<0.05	<0.05	runoff from fertilizer use	no
Radioactive Contaminants								
Gross Alpha	10/08/2013	pCi/L	15	0	0	0	erosion of natural deposits	no
Combined Radium 226/228	10/08/2013	pCi/L	5	0	ND	ND	erosion of natural deposits	no

Disinfectant By-Products

TTHMs (total trihalomethanes)	7/19/2013	Ppb	80	0	29.46	7.7-20.50	by-product of drinking water disinfection	no
THAs (Total Haloacetics)	7/17/2013	ppb	60	0	21.90	5.8-14.9	by-product of drinking water disinfection	no

Water Quality Table Footnotes

Turbidity of less than 5.0 NTU typically not visible to the naked eye.

Unregulated Contaminants

Several years of quarterly and semi-annual testing within our distribution system showed radon readings in our water are low and should not be cause for concern. Radon levels ranged from 245 to 1227 Pico curies per liter (pCi/L). The EPA has proposed an AMCL (Alternative Maximum Contaminant Level) of 4000 pCi/L. Radon is an odorless, tasteless, radioactive gas that can move up through the ground and into a home through cracks and holes in the foundation. Radon can also get into indoor air when released from tap water from showering, washing dishes, and other activities. 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 pCi/L or higher. There are simple ways to fix a radon problem that aren't too costly. For additional information, call the Chatham Health Department (860-365-3124) or the EPA's Radon Hotline (800-SOS-RADON).

Additional Health Information

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes limits on the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled 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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include river, 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 radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants 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, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm 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, storm water runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organics, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and may also come from gas stations, urban storm water 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, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems.

FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health. Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immune-compromised persons such as those 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* are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

The State Department of Public Health performed an assessment of our drinking water sources in conjunction with the State and Town's Aquifer Protection Area regulations help protect the Town's valuable public drinking water sources. The Town regulation can be found at http://www.colchesterct.gov/Pages/ColchesterCT_Dept/PZ/regs/ap/APAFINAL.pdf

Concerning Lead in our Water

At the sampling frequency and quantity required for the Town of Colchester system by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the 90th percentile was below the state action level (see Table above). The 90th percentile is the threshold value used by the State for reporting lead and copper test results. 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. Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Concerning Copper in our Water

At the sampling frequency and quantity required for the Town of Colchester system by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the 90th percentile was below the state action level (see Table above). The 90th percentile is the threshold value used by the State for reporting lead and copper test results. Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's disease should consult their personal doctor.

Concerning Fluoride in our Water

Fluoride has been proven to prevent tooth decay in both children and adults. In some areas it can be found naturally, however, it has not been found in recent samples taken by the Department. Fluoride is not added to the water supply in Colchester.

National Primary Drinking Water Regulation Compliance

Variations and Exemptions

Under a waiver granted on February 9, 1999, by the DPH the northern wells were granted a waiver for dioxin and endoathall testing because potential sources of these compounds do not exist within the aquifer recharge area. The same waiver was granted for the western wells on September 28, 1993.

On February 11, 2009, the DPH reduced sampling and testing requirements for the Town based on four consecutive quarterly monitoring periods with no detectable levels of regulated organic chemicals, no levels above MCLs for radionuclides, and no detections of any regulated pesticides, herbicides, or PCBs. New sampling and testing periods are annually, every three years, and two routine samples every three years, respectively.

This report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Safe Drinking Water Act. We'll be happy to answer any questions about Colchester Sewer and Water Commission and the water quality. Call us at 860-537-7288 Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm except holidays.

Source Water Protection

Source water is untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, or underground aquifers that are used to supply public drinking water. Preventing drinking water contamination at the source makes good public health sense, good economic sense, and good environmental sense. You can be aware of the challenges of keeping drinking water safe and take an active role in protection drinking water. There are lots of ways that you can get involved in drinking water protection activities to prevent the contamination of the ground water source. Dispose properly of household chemicals, help clean up the watershed that is the source of your community's water, and attend public meetings to ensure that the community's need for safe drinking water is considered in making decisions about land use. Contact us at 860-537-7288 for more information on source water protection, or contact the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 1-800-426-4791. You may also find information on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/safewater/protect.html

Water Conservation

Water is a limited resource so it is vital that we all work together to maintain it and use it wisely. Here are a few tips you can follow to help conserve:

- Check for leaky toilets (put a drop of food coloring in the tank, let it sit, if the water in the bowl turns color, you have a leak). A leaking faucet or toilet can dribble away thousands of gallons of water a year.
- Consider replacing your 5 gallon per flush toilet with an efficient 1.6 gallon per flush unit. This will permanently cut your water consumption by as much as 25%.
- Run only full loads in dishwashers and washing machines. Rinse all hand-washed dishes at once. Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Store a jug of ice water in the refrigerator for a cold drink.
- Water lawn and plants in the early morning or evening hours to avoid excess evaporation. Don't water on windy, rainy, or very hot days. Water shrubs and gardens using a slow trickle around the roots. A slow soaking encourages deep root growth, reduces leaf burn or mildew and prevents water loss. Select low water demanding plants that provide an attractive landscape without high water use.

- Apply mulch around flowers, shrubs, vegetable and trees to reduce evaporation, promote plant growth and control weeds. Shrubs and ground covers require much less maintenance, less water and provide year round greenery.
- Be sure that your hose has a shut off nozzle. Hoses without a nozzle can spout 10 gallons more per minute. When washing you car, wet it quickly, turn off the spray, wash it with soapy water from the bucket, rinse quickly. Be sure sprinklers water only your lawn, not the pavement.