

Whatcom County Water District # 7

2022 Water Quality Report

MAY 2023

This report is a requirement of the Safe Drinking Water Act. It provides you with a summary of the tests performed on your drinking water in 2022 so you can assess for yourself how clean your water is. Much of this report is technical in nature, and much of the language used is required by law. If you have any trouble understanding the content, or have any questions you are welcome to call Lab Supervisor Peg Wendling at 778-7872.

Water District #7 is a reseller of water. All water sold by the District is purchased from the City of Bellingham and has been processed by the city's water treatment plant, located in Whatcom Falls Park.

The City's water and thus the District water, comes from Lake Whatcom. Lake Whatcom is a natural reservoir, located east of the City of Bellingham, this is where the city draws its water from then pumps it to the Filtration Plant, to undergo filtration and disinfection. The City maintains a comprehensive water quality testing program. Water District #7 also tests for the presence of coliform bacteria and residual chlorine on a regular basis to help ensure a safe reliable supply of water.

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 radioactive material and can pick up substances resulting from animal or human activity. All raw water, including all surface water must go through a treatment process before it is safe to drink.

“Some people may be more vulnerable to drinking water contaminants than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons, such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplant, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk for infections.

These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease control 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.

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 Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

The Environmental Protection Agency prescribes regulations which limit the number of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The water supplied by Whatcom County Water District #7 exceeded all Federal Guidelines last year.

Reportable Parameters For 2022

Disinfection By-Products:

Total Trihalomethanes (THM) and **Haloacetic Acids (HAA)**.

THMs and HAAs are the most common type of disinfection by-products (DBP's). The City samples for DBP's at 8 sites in the water distribution system each quarter. Levels for 2022 were: THM: Average: (all sites) 39 ppb: Range: 16.0 to 50.0 ppb.

HAA: Average (all sites) 14 ppb Range: 7.0 to 18.0 ppb

Average MCL must be below 80 ppb THM and below 60 ppb HAA

Water District #7's average disinfection by-product levels were: THM Average 38.38 ppb Range: 27.8 to 46.5 ppb.

HAA Average: 11.43 ppb Range: 10.3 to 12.6 ppb.

Free Chlorine Residual: Chlorine levels are monitored continuously at the water filtration plant. Over 100 distribution system samples are also analyzed each month to ensure a disinfectant residual remains in treated water on its way to our customer's homes. Of the chlorine samples collected in the distribution system the average chlorine was 0.50 ppm with a range of <0.02 to 0.93 ppm. There is a requirement for a measurable chlorine residual at 95% of all monitoring sites a month.

Lead and Copper; Lead and copper are monitored every three years in Our customer's homes to assess the amount of corrosion occurring in home plumbing. The water sampled in the first draw of stagnant water in homes identified as having lead solder and copper pipe. There are no lead service lines in Bellingham. Sampling will next be conducted in 2023.

*Treatment technique is a required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water. *90th percentile of samples collected.*

Lead—The 90th percentile value of 44 homes sampled showed lead at the 6-ppb level. The range of values was <1 to 12 ppb.

Copper—The 90th percentile value of homes sampled was 65 ppb. The range of values was 2 to 118 ppb. No sites were above the action level.

The allowable highest 90th percentile values are: Lead: 15 ppb Copper: 1300 ppb

Lead and copper are monitored every 3 years. There are no lead service lines in Bellingham. Sampling will next be conducted in 2023.

Total and Fecal Coliform Bacteria: Bellingham collects over 100 samples a month at locations throughout our water distribution system and analyzes these for coliform bacteria to ensure water purity. No more than 5% of these samples can be positive for total coliform bacteria and none can be positive for *Escherichia coli*. Coliform bacteria 2% positive in July, 1% positive in August, 0% positive all other months. No *Escherichia coli* was detected in 2022.

The highest allowable percentage of total coliform positive samples a month is 5%. The presence of any fecal coliform in drinking water samples of two consecutive samples would require public notification of this problem within 24 hours.

Water District #7 takes two coliform samples each month within the District. No positive coliform was detected in 2022.

Turbidity: Turbidity is a measurement of the clarity of the water. The city monitors turbidity continuously at the beginning, middle and end of the treatment process. Turbidity reported for compliance is in the treated water. Bellingham's single highest turbidity level for 2022 was 0.07 nephelometric units (NTU). Bellingham met the Dept. of Health's limit 0.3 NTU requirement in 2022 100% of the time.

Compliance means filtered water turbidity shall be less than or equal to 0.3 NTU in at least 95% of the measurements made each month and shall never exceed 1.0 NTU.

. ** Elevated levels of lead in drinking water can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. In Bellingham fortunately lead is not found in the treated water, but lead in drinking water can come from pipes and faucets in our customers' homes. The City of Bellingham is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in customer's plumbing. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for at least 30 seconds before using the water for drinking or cooking. You can capture this water to use on plants. If you are concerned about lead in your water you may wish to have your water analyzed by a local laboratory. To learn more about lead in water, go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>

ppm = parts per million, ppb = parts per billion, MCL = maximum contaminant level, AL = Action Level

MRDL = maximum Residual Disinfectant Level, MCLG = Maximum contaminant Level Goal

Water System Plan

The District completed change out of all touch read meters with a new automated meter reading system to improve accuracy, reduce meter reading time and cost. During the Leak Detection program budgeted by the District, many of the lines will be uncovered, which will help identify deficient mains requiring replacement. Several older mains that comprise the infrastructure of the distribution system are prioritized for replacement. These mains run approximately 6,500 ft from the Britton Road/Emerald Lake Way intersection south to the Britton Booster Pump Station; south on Toad Lake Road approximately 3,600 ft. just north of Hillsdale Road to Academy Road and approximately 4,200 ft East on Academy Road from Toad Lake Road to the Academy Tank. The replacement project for the above pipelines is budgeted over the next 10-year period, and will require substantial rate and fee increases. Financing is anticipated to come from Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRF) loans, USDA Rural Development Loans, and local funds from water revenue. Grants may be available and will be utilized whenever available to reduce the cost for consumers. The priority of pipeline replacement may change based upon discoveries from the Leak Detection Program.

Water Use Efficiency

Water use efficiency benefits our community and our customers. Reducing individual water use can lower monthly water bills. Reducing lost water, primarily due to leaks, also indirectly reduces water bills because we purchase less water from Bellingham and less electricity to operate the system. Think of “water efficiency” as a way to eliminate wasteful water practices and promote the long-term goal of saving water and reducing costs. State law also requires the district to implement a water use efficiency program.

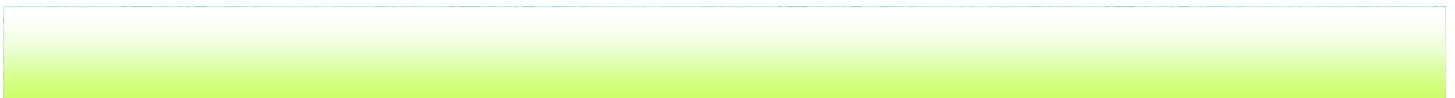
In addition to public awareness, leak detection, and infrastructure replacement, the district implemented an increasing rate structure in 2008 to encourage water use efficiency. This means that the cost of water increases as you consume more. Customers can directly impact their water bill by using less water. A leaking faucet or toilet wastes thousands of gallons a year and only cost a few dollars to repair. Letting the water run while washing your car or watering the lawn too often are simple habits you can change that will also save you money. Faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads are very inexpensive and easy to install water saving measures. Most people don't realize that in one-year, common water leaks in your home can waste enough water to fill a backyard swimming pool.

The District is always looking for water leaks during regular maintenance and meter reading. However, we need your help to identify possible leaks by reporting running water, unusual wet spots or green areas, especially during the summer months. One way for a customer to identify a possible leak on their property is when their water use or water bill increases significantly. It is important to remember that the district is responsible for repairs and maintenance up to and including the water meter serving a customer, but everything beyond the water meter, including any pressure reducing device on the customer's side of the meter, is the responsibility of the property owner and cannot be repaired by the district.

The District's water loss has greatly increased over the last year. In 2022 we purchased 5,187,000 Gallons of water and delivered 4,214,979 Gallons leaving about 18.7% unaccounted for, most likely due to leaks and construction.

Leak Adjustments

Customers frequently ask if they can get a credit on their bill when they have a leak on their side of the meter. The District purchases all of its water from the City of Bellingham and is obligated to pass that cost onto the customers and therefore is not able to credit a bill for water loss due to a leak. However, the District does have a “Leak Credit Policy” that allows for an adjustment to the rate paid for lost water due to a **substantiated** leak. If you find a leak, make repairs immediately, keep receipts and photographic record of the repair, and then contact the district about how to apply for a Leak Adjustment. Below is a summary of the District's Leak Adjustment Policy.



LEAK ADJUSTMENT POLICY

The District may adjust the commodity charge for high water bills due to a leak. "Leak" refers to a structural or mechanical failure of the customer's water piping system resulting in a significant loss of water. No adjustment shall be made for a loss less than 1,000 cubic feet per bi-monthly billing period or more than one adjustment in a twelve (12) month period per account. Intentional or accidental water use, loss due to vandalism, or theft does constitute a leak.

When the District observes a leak or high usage it will attempt to notify the occupant or property owner (phone #'s greatly appreciated) but it shall remain the property owners' responsibility to discover and repair any leak. To be eligible for a leak adjustment, the owner must complete repairs and submit a signed adjustment request along with proof of repairs, within two (2) weeks of the date the occupant or owner was notified by the District, or otherwise knew or should have known of the leak. If there are no invoices or receipts available, a written assertion that the leak was repaired is acceptable. Failure to complete the preceding may forfeit any opportunity for a leak adjustment.

The quantity of water eligible for a leak adjustment will be the total water used for the billing period in which the leak was identified less the quantity of water used from the same billing period in the previous year. If the customer has occupied the house for less than one year, the quantity to be deducted will be the average of the three billing cycles immediately prior to the discovery of the leak.

When a leak occurs, the overage may show up on more than one consecutive billing cycle, and therefore upon request, the District may adjust up to two billing cycles to assure the customer receives the most favorable adjustment. Late charges on bills approved for a leak adjustment will be waived if the customer adheres to a prearranged payment schedule. There is no cap to limit the customer's costs.

Water Billing & Shut Off Procedures

Water meters are read and Water Bills are mailed every other month.

Past due notices are mailed every other month opposite the Water Bill months.

Water bills indicate the "Bill Date" and "Due Date" after which the current balance becomes past due.

A Late Charge of 4% or \$10.00, whichever is greater, is charged monthly on the past due amount

Accounts past due more than Sixty (60) days and greater than \$80.00 may have water service shut off.

A Shut Off charge of \$50 is assessed when staff is dispatched to shut water off. A Turn On charge of \$50

is assessed after service has been turned on. Accounts past due more than Sixty (60) days and greater

than \$200.00 may have a lien placed against the property. For more information you can contact the

district at office@waterdistrict7.com or at 360-752-9208.

Smart Watering Schedule

Residents are asked to limit watering to the following schedule to help reduce stress on the City's drinking water supply from June 1st to September 15th annually:

- Odd numbered street addresses water only on Wednesdays, Fridays, and/or Sundays.
- Even numbered street addresses water only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and/or Saturdays.
- No outdoor watering on **Mondays** to allow the City's reservoirs to recharge.

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
Odd	No Watering	Even	Odd	Even	Odd	Even

~Your elected commissioners for 2022~

George Kaas, Mark Lann & Tessa Ebbesen

Dave Olson – Operations Mgr. & Deanna Campbell - Office Administrator

Your commissioners meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. at 601 Northshore Dr. Ste. 101, Bellingham.