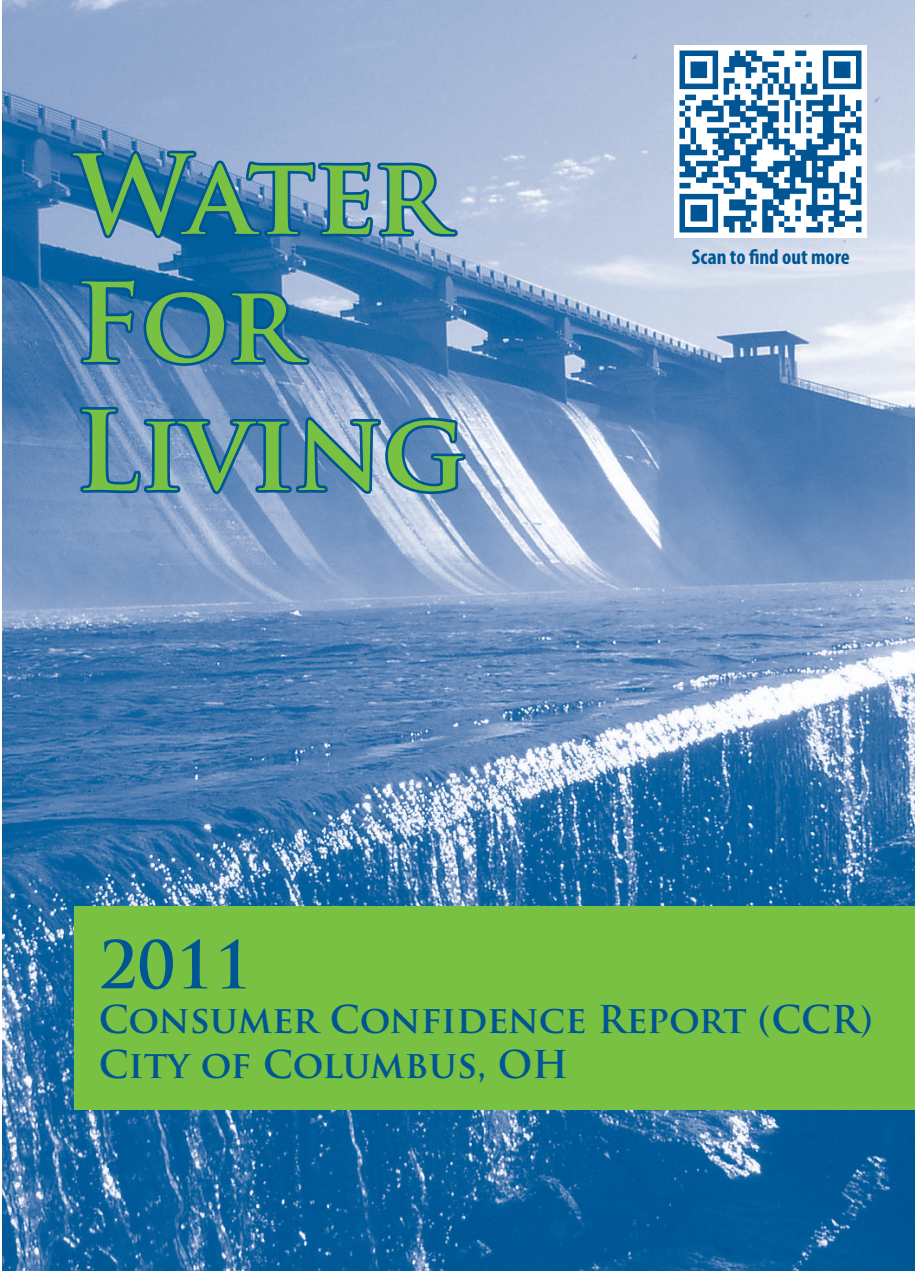


Water For Living

Scan to find out more

2011
Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)
City of Columbus, OH

How to Contact Us

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES

Division of Power & Water
910 Dublin Road
Columbus, OH 43215

Water Quality Assurance Laboratory
(614) 645-7691

- Water Quality Monitoring Questions
- Regulatory Inquiries
- Taste/Odor/Colored Water Concerns

Customer Service
(614) 645-8276

- Customer Billing Inquiries
- Open/Close Accounts
- Schedule Service Calls
- Process Bill Payments

Distribution/Maintenance
(614) 645-7788

- Water Emergencies (evenings/ weekends)
- Report Waterline Breaks
- Report Hydrant Damage or Leaks

Michael B. Coleman
Mayor, City of Columbus

Greg J. Davies
Director, Department of Public Utilities

Richard C. Westerfield, P.E., PhD.
Administrator, Division of Power and Water

This report can also be found on our website at **www.utilities.columbus.gov.** Just click on "Consumer Confidence."
It meets the EPA's National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Consumer Confidence Reports.

Sewer and Water Advisory Board

In 1984, the City of Columbus formed the Columbus Sewer and Water Advisory Board (SWAB) to oversee the operations and rate structures of both the Divisions of Power and Water and Sewerage and Drainage. The board, comprised of city officials and six Columbus residents who represent different constituencies — such as senior citizens and the business community — meets quarterly to advise the Divisions on business decisions and best practices. Chaired by Ohio State University's Wallace Giffen, the board forwards their recommendation to Columbus City Council, who then deliberate to officially set rates or change fundamental policy.

SWAB meetings are open to the public; call (614) 645-3956 for a schedule of meeting times and dates.

Your 2011 Water Report

The goal of the City of Columbus is to ensure that any contaminants in your drinking water are restricted below a level at which there is no known health risk. This report shows the types and amounts of key elements in your water supply, their likely sources and the maximum contaminant level (MCL) that the EPA considers safe. **The water delivered to your home meets ALL of the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).** We use a complex multi-barrier treatment process to assure safe drinking water is delivered to our customers. If for any reason the standards are not met, the public will be notified. If you have any questions about this data please call the Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at (614) 645-7691.

Did You Know...

Less than 1% of the world's fresh water supplies are available for human consumption.

60% of an adult's body is water; 78% of a newborn's body is water.

Water is the original health beverage - it contains no fat, calories or cholesterol.

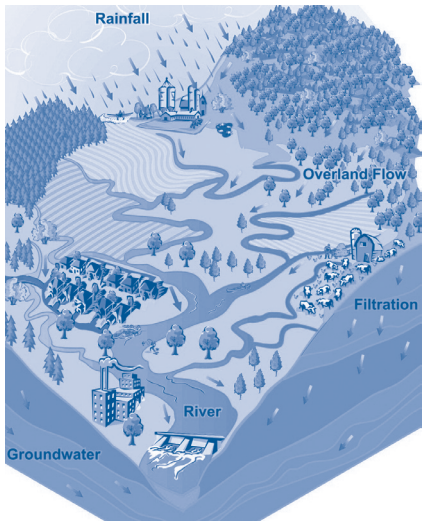
We work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure you have a ready supply of high quality drinking water. We operate and maintain 3 water treatment plants, 26 pump stations, 37 water storage tanks, 3,485 miles of water lines and nearly 27,000 hydrants.

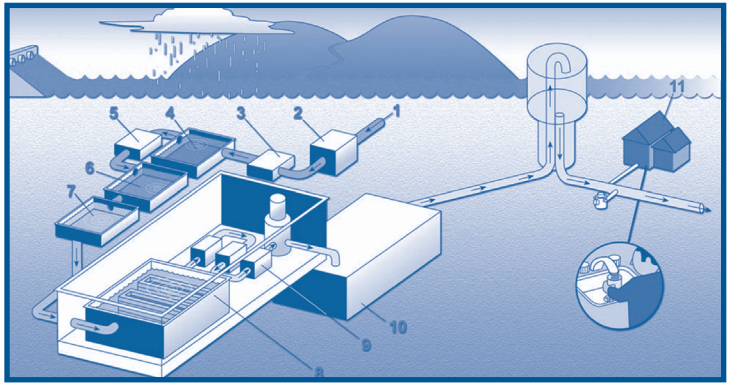
CDPU delivers over 50 billion gallons of water a year to 1.1 million people. In an average day, 138 million gallons of water is pumped throughout the city with an average usage of 122 gallons per person per day.

A watershed (right) is an area of land that drains all water to a common basin, stream, river or lake.

Urbanization and increases in impervious surfaces (hard, non-porous) are significant threats to the protection of high-quality drinking water sources & aquatic habitats. You can take many simple steps at home to protect our water supply. See "We All Have a Hand in Water Protection" featured inside for more information.

Benefits of protecting our watershed include: quality drinking water sources, clean rivers for recreation, healthy habitat for plants, fish and animals, erosion control and pollution prevention.





The Water Treatment Process

Water flows (1) to the treatment plant from the reservoir or stream through rotating screens (2) to remove large debris. It is then pumped into the plant where alum is added (3) to cause coagulation. After rapid mixing, the water remains in the settling basin (4) while sedimentation of floc occurs (2-4 hours). The water treatment residual (settled floc) is pumped from the bottom of the pools and stored in holding lagoons to dry.

The softening process (5) involves the addition of sodium carbonate (soda ash) or caustic soda and hydrated lime to remove calcium and magnesium ions that are responsible for water hardness. This process takes an additional 2-4 hours. For each pound of chemical used in the treatment process, two pounds are removed.

After an additional sedimentation process, carbon dioxide is added (6) to lower the pH level to approximately 7.8. Water is held in a stabilizing basin (7) for another 2-4 hours.

Water then flows through large dual-media rapid sand filters made up of layers of gravel, sand and antracite coal (8).

Addition of chlorine to disinfect the water, fluoride to protect teeth and a corrosion inhibitor take place at the end of the process (9) before water enters large underground clearwells (10) to be held until needed by the community (11).

Please note: When ground water is used (as in the case of the Parsons Avenue Water Plant), neither screening (2) nor initial sedimentation (3, 4) is needed.

Source Water Assessment Information

A high-quality source water supply allows the Division of Power & Water to provide consumers with quality water at a reasonable cost. Protecting our raw water sources requires investments to secure the needs of a growing population, now and in the future. As part of its on-going efforts to maintain regulatory compliance and monitor our water supply, the Division of Power & Water has completed a Source Water Assessment process. Below is a synopsis of the results:

The City of Columbus water system uses surface water from the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek, as well as ground water pumped from sand and gravel deposits of the Scioto River Valley. All three sources of water have a relatively high susceptibility to contamination from spills or releases of chemicals. The ground water pumped at the Parsons Avenue plant is susceptible (compared to other ground water systems) because there is no significant clay overlying and protecting the aquifer deposits. The Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek are even more susceptible because they are more accessible and less protected from spills.

The drinking water source protection areas for the City of Columbus' three water sources contain numerous potential contaminant sources, especially the protection area for the Dublin Road Water Treatment Plant (extending along the Scioto River). These include industrial activities, storm water runoff from developing areas, and a heavily traveled transportation network running alongside and over the water bodies. Run-off from agricultural fields is a concern in both the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek watersheds.

The City of Columbus treats the water to meet drinking water quality standards, but no single treatment protocol can address all potential contaminants. The City has been proactive in pursuing measures to further protect its source waters. These include land stewardship programs and incentive-driven programs to reduce erosion and run-off of pesticides and fertilizers into the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek and their reservoirs. More detailed information is provided in the City of Columbus' Drinking Water Source Assessment Report, which can be viewed by calling the Watershed section at (614) 645-1721. Visit **www.watershed.columbus.gov** for more details about the land stewardship program**.**

Be More Green

A healthy, plentiful water supply begins by protecting water at its source; we can all make smart choices to positively impact the quality of our water. A brief synopsis "We All Have a Hand in Water Protection" follows, but please visit online at **www.utilities.columbus.gov** for more detailed information. Look for the Be More Green icon.

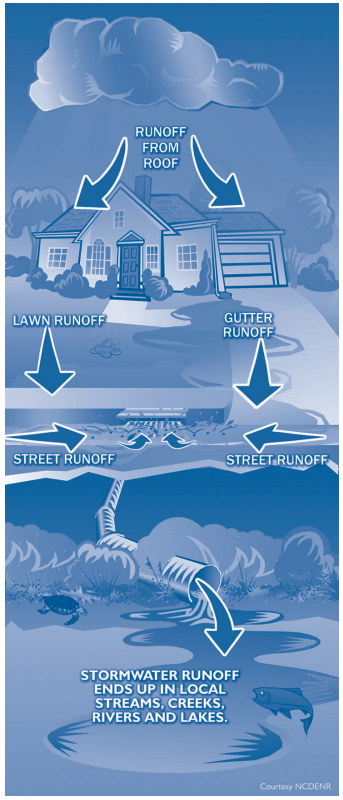
We All Have a Hand in Water Protection

Help Protect Our Water Resources by Making Smart Choices.
Our quality of life and health is greatly dependent upon the quality of our water. Fish and other wildlife also rely on the responsible stewardship of our natural resources. Activities in our homes, yards and communities have an effect on the quality of our water supplies. We can do a lot to protect our waterways by managing storm water, which, as it travels over a variety of surfaces (yards, roof tops, driveways, parking lots and roadways) picks up and carries anything in its path including litter, yard waste, oil, fertilizer, animal waste, brake fluid, and more. These pollutants drain, untreated, into local waterways. By taking simple steps at home, you can have a positive impact.

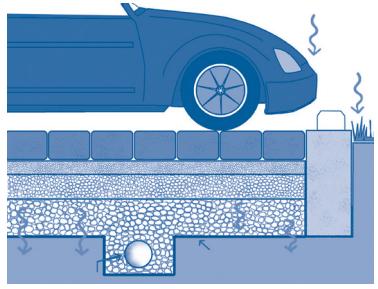
Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste Properly
These are materials used in the home that can cause injury or are harmful if disposed of improperly. Examples include pesticides, fertilizers, motor oil, antifreeze, adhesives, drain cleaners, bleach, fluorescent bulbs, paint or solvents. Never dump these items into a storm drain, open waterway or ditch. Storm drains discharge directly to streams without the benefit of treatment, unlike the drains inside homes that connect to the sanitary sewer system. Beyond posing a threat to our health and environment, such dumping is illegal. For proper disposal and free drop-off locations, contact SWACO at (614) 871-5100 or visit **www.swaco.org.**

Make Simple Lawn Care Choices
Choose native plants, hand pull weeds, spot treat problem areas, or better yet, consider less toxic alternatives such as beneficial insects (ladybugs, mantids, etc). Native perennial plants thrive in our soil and climate, require little maintenance, water or chemicals. Dispose of yard waste properly, including pet waste. Even better, use the mulching feature on your mower instead of bagging the clippings, or create your own compost from your yard waste.

Make Smart Choices Maintaining Cars and Driveways
Simple steps can prevent many common pollutants from washing off your driveway into storm drains that lead to rivers. Maintain vehicles to prevent leaking fluids. If you do have a leak, absorb the material with sand or cat litter, then sweep up and place in the trash. Wash your car over gravel or in the yard. Better yet, go to a commercial car wash when possible - they are required to dispose of the water through the sanitary sewer system, where it will be treated. Sweep debris from sidewalks and driveways to place in the trash.



Reduce Stormwater Runoff
Pave only the area needed on your property. Landscaped areas absorb water and generate less runoff than hard-surfaces. Green space also provides a natural pollution-filtering system. Better yet, pave with pervious surface; it slows down, soaks in and cleans up stormwater naturally. Plant a rain garden using deep rooted, native plants arranged in a bowl-shaped garden to slow and filter rainwater. Plant trees and shrubs - the roots hold water in the ground, slow runoff and reduce erosion. Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater for later use; use soaker hoses or drip irrigation and don't over-water (1" per week is enough for most lawns). If you use sprinklers, aim them away from paved surfaces.



Protecting Our Water Sources with Green Infrastructure
A healthy, plentiful water supply begins by protecting water at its source. Green infrastructure offers promising solutions to help remove contaminants which enter our raw water supply through untreated storm water. It is designed to capture or intercept this surface water runoff. Once detained, the suspended pollutants can settle out and filter through pervious surfaces, and plant material can absorb excess nutrients.

When our landscapes allow storm water to slow down and soak into the ground, many of these pollutants will filter out naturally. Additionally, by slowing the flow and volume of storm water, we can reduce stream bank damage, sedimentation and erosion. The result is cleaner water entering our rivers, streams, and reservoirs - a more healthy environment for everyone.

The City of Columbus is using green infrastructure to improve the quality of storm water entering the reservoirs that supply our drinking water. Visitors to the parkland surrounding Griggs, O'Shaughnessy and Hoover reservoirs will see a variety of methods used to capture and treat stormwater flowing from nearby neighborhoods and roadways. Look for interpretive signage at each of the reservoirs and take a self-guided tour along the shoreline to see examples of pervious pavement, rain gardens, shoreline stabilization and more.

Visit www.utilities.columbus.gov or watershed.columbus.gov for more information. Look for the "Be More Green" and "Keep it Clean" features to learn more.

Primary Drinking Water Standards

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremean Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Violation?	Where did it come from?
				Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range		
Fluoride (ppm)	2011	4	4	1.17	0.59-1.17	1.09	0.60-1.09	0.96	0.85-0.96	No	Water additive – protects teeth
Nitrate (ppm)	2011	10	10	5.6	0.6-5.6	2.0	<0.5-2.0	1.0	<0.5-1.0	No	Agricultural fertilizer runoff
Simazine (ppb)	2011	4	4	<0.10	<0.10-0.17	0.19	<0.10-0.30	ND1	ND1	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Atrazine (ppb)	2011	3	3	0.43	<0.10-1.66	0.25	<0.10-0.63	ND1	ND1	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Alachlor (ppb)	2011	2	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND1	ND1	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Metolachlor (ppb)	2011	No set level	No goal set	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND1	ND1	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Metribuzin (ppb)	2011	No set level	No goal set	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND1	ND1	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Chloroform (ppb)	2011	No set level	70	17.0	N/A	25.0	N/A	2.2	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Bromodichloromethane (ppb)	2011	No set level	0	5.4	N/A	5.0	N/A	3.7	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Dibromochloromethane (ppb)	2011	No set level	60	0.8	N/A	0.6	N/A	4.1	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Bromoform (ppb)	2011	No set level	0	< 0.5	N/A	< 0.5	N/A	1.6	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	2011	80	No goal set	54.4	24.4-93.1	50.5	30.3-71.2	19.9	11.2-28.3	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	2011	60	No goal set	37.1	19.9-60.5	35.8	22.1-44.7	4.0	1.6-6.1	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Organic Carbon	2011	TT (removal ratio >1)	No goal set	2.38	1.68-3.71	2.27	1.86-3.05	N/A	N/A	No	Naturally present in environment
Total Coliform Bacteria	2011	Present in <5% of monthly samples	0%	0.0%	0-0.0%	0.0%	0.0-0.0%	0.0%	0.0-0.0%	No	Bacteria present in environment
Total Chlorine (ppm)	2011	4 (MRDL)	4 (MRDLG)	1.54	0.43-2.90	1.57	0.38-2.60	1.07	0.38-2.13	No	Disinfectant
Turbidity (NTU)	2011	TT (<1 NTU)	No goal set	0.17	0.03-0.17	0.15	0.03-0.15	N/A	N/A	No	Soil runoff
		TT (% meeting Std.)	No goal set	100%	100-100%	100%	100-100%	N/A	N/A		

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	Action Level (AL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Concentration at 90th percentile	Range	# of sites found above the Action Level	Violation?	Where did it come from?
Lead (ppb)	2011	15	0	< 1	< 1 – 44.8	1 out of 50	No	Corrosion of household plumbing
Copper (ppm)	2011	1.3	1.3	0.069	0.003 – 0.215	0 out of 50	No	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits

1 2009 Data, Not Required to monitor in 2011.

Other Water Quality Parameters of Interest

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremean Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Where did it come from?
				Annual Avg.	Range	Annual Avg.	Range	Annual Avg.	Range	
pH (units)	2011	7.0-10.5 (SMCL)	No goal set	7.8	7.7 - 7.8	7.8	7.7 – 7.9	7.8	7.7 - 7.8	Treatment process
Hardness (ppm)	2011	No set level	No goal set	123	120 - 128	102	81 - 140	122	120 - 123	Naturally occurring
Hardness (gpg)				7.2	7.0 - 7.5	6.0	4.7 – 8.2	7.1	7.0 – 7.2	
Sodium (ppm)	2011	No set level	No goal set	50	20 - 161	15	10 - 37	68	53 - 99	Natural/Treatment process

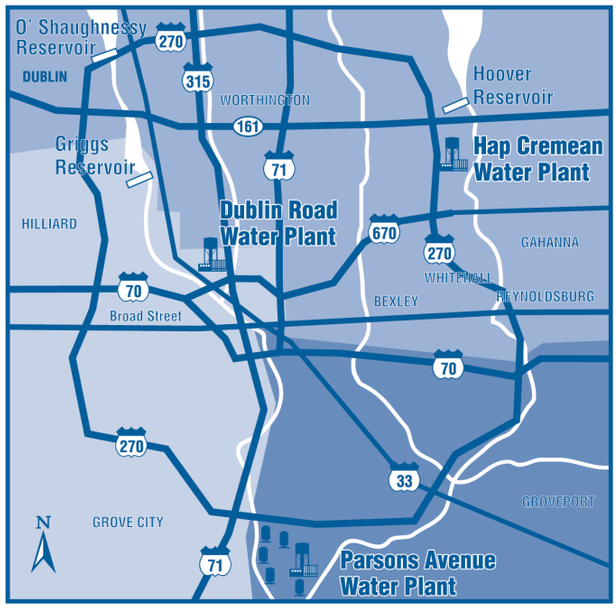
If you have any questions about this data please call the Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at **(614) 645-7691**, or visit **www.utilities.columbus.gov.**

Definitions and Terms

Action Level (AL)	The concentration of a contaminant, which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	The level of a contaminant in drinking water, below which there is no known or expected health risk. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	The highest level of contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLG as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
Secondary MCL (SMCL)	A nonenforceable numerical limit set by the USEPA for a contaminant on the basis of aesthetic effects to prevent an undesirable taste, odor, or appearance.
N/A	Not Applicable
ND	No Detect
NTU	Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (a measure of particles held in suspension in water).
Parts per Billion (ppb) or Micrograms per Liter (ug/L)	Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per billion corresponds to one second in roughly 31.7 years.
Parts per Million (ppm) or Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per million corresponds to one second in roughly 11.5 days.
Grains per Gallon (gpg)	A non-metric unit of measurement for hardness used in North America.
MRDL	Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level: 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.
MRDLG	Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal: The level of 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.
The ">" symbol	This symbol means "greater than."
The "<" symbol	This symbol means "less than." For example, a result of < 5 means that the lowest level that could be detected was 5 and the contaminant in that sample was not detected.
Treatment Technique (TT)	A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water. For Total Organic Carbon (TOC) the level must be above 1. For turbidity the level must be under 0.3 NTU 95% of the time, and always < 1 NTU.
Turbidity	A measurement of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indication of water quality and the effectiveness of our treatment process.

OhioEPA Division of Drinking and Ground Waters Certified

The City of Columbus has a current, unconditioned license to operate our public water system.



The Water Service Area Map

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. Each home, school and business in the greater Columbus area receives water from one of the following three water plants:

- **Dublin Road Water Plant (DRWP)** serves northwestern and southwestern residents using water from Griggs and O'Shaughnessy Reservoirs.
- **Hap Cremean Water Plant (HCWP)** serves OSU and northern residents. The water source is the Hoover Reservoir.
- **Parsons Avenue Water Plant (PAWP)** draws water from wells and serves residents in the southeast.

What's NOT in Your Water

Reports on TV and in the press often raise concerns about the health risks associated with the presence of certain minerals, chemicals, or other contaminants in your food or water. The Columbus Division of Power & Water performs tens of thousands of tests each year to ensure drinking water quality. Many substances for which the Division tests never appear in this report because they are not found in the drinking water. For example, there are 51 volatile organic chemicals as well as arsenic, perchlorate, asbestos, MTBE, radium 228, and ammonia (just to name a few) that are NOT found in your drinking 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, in some cases, 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 water 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 storm water runoff, and residential uses; organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems; and radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, USEPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in drinking water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

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 at 1(800) 426-4791.

Lead in the Home

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. The City of Columbus is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot 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 thirty seconds to two 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. A list of laboratories certified in the State of Ohio to test for lead may be found at **www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw** or by calling (614) 644-2752. 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 **www.epa.gov/safewater/lead** or at 1(800) 426-4791.

The lead concentration in the drinking water leaving our water treatment plants is below the level of detection. Most homes in the Columbus area do not have lead service lines and have little to no detectable levels of lead in their tap water.

You can also call (614) 645-8276 for your free copy of "What You Need to Know About Lead in Drinking Water." This information can also be found online at **www.drinkingwater.columbus.gov** in the Common Water Quality Concerns feature.

Turbidity

Utilities that treat surface water and/or filter the water are required to monitor for turbidity which is a measure of the cloudiness of water and is an indication of the effectiveness of our filtration system. The turbidity limit set by the EPA is 0.3 NTU in 95% of the daily samples and shall not exceed 1 NTU at any time. The highest recorded turbidity for HCWP was 0.15 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 100%. The highest recorded turbidity for DRWP was 0.17 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 100%.

Total Organic Carbon

The value reported under "Level Found" for Total Organic Carbon (TOC) is the lowest running annual average ratio between the percentage of TOC actually removed to the percentage of TOC required to be removed. A value of greater than one indicates that the water system is in compliance with TOC removal requirements. A value of less than one indicates a violation of the TOC removal requirements. The value reported under "Range" for TOC is the lowest monthly ratio to the highest monthly ratio.

Newborns and Nitrate

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. Local television, radio and print media will be notified within 24 hours if the level of nitrate rises above 10 ppm. The media will similarly be notified once the level decreases. If you are caring for an infant you should seek advice from your health care provider. Visit **www.drinkingwater.columbus.gov** for additional information about nitrates; look under Common Water Quality Concerns.

None of the water supplied by the Columbus water plants exceeded the nitrate MCL in 2011.

Health Concerns

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised individuals such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infection. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water.

Cryptosporidium ("Crypto"), for example, is a microscopic organism that, when ingested, can result in diarrhea, fever, and other gastrointestinal symptoms. *It is important to note not all Crypto species are human pathogens and may not cause any adverse affects in humans.* Crypto comes from animal waste in the watershed and may be found in our source water; it is found in surface water throughout the US. Crypto is eliminated by using a multi-barrier water treatment process including coagulation, sedimentation, softening, filtration and disinfection; however, the most commonly used filtration methods cannot guarantee 100 percent removal.

Crypto was detected 10 out of 28 times in the Scioto River and 11 out of 29 times in Big Walnut Creek. Also, 2 out of 12 times Crypto was detected in DRWP tap water and 1 out of 12 times in HCWP tap water. It should be noted, the presence in tap water was *minimal* and current testing methods do not enable us to determine if the organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease. Since these results are inconsistent with historical data spanning over fifteen years, additional pro-active testing was conducted to confirm the presence of Crypto. Because these results were inconclusive, advanced genotype testing was recently performed that verified the Crypto species detected were nonhuman pathogens.

EPA/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 at 1(800) 426-4791. For additional information or questions about Columbus water quality please call the Water Quality Assurance Lab at (614) 645-7691.

Water Quality Assurance

The City of Columbus' Water Quality Assurance Laboratory (WQAL) is a large modern water lab with a long history of distinguished public service starting under the noted water quality chemist Charles Hoover. The lab continues to maintain that tradition of excellence and technical innovation in the ongoing use of state-of-the-art equipment for water analysis, while continuing to research the latest advancements in water treatment techniques.

The WQAL performs water quality monitoring and treatment research to ensure that Columbus drinking water meets or is better than all federally mandated Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) standards. The WQAL also provides water quality information to the water treatment plants and addresses customer complaints and inquiries regarding water quality. In 2011, the WQAL's EPA licensed and certified laboratory staff completed over 40,000 analyses relating to 29 different organic, inorganic, and microbiological water quality parameters.

To maintain compliance with current SDWA regulations, WQAL activities in 2011 were again directed at developing information regarding new and upcoming rules. These include the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR), Stages 1 and 2 of the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts Rule (D/DBP), and the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2ESWTR.) Additionally, the lab has been closely involved in planning the improvement of watershed and water distribution system surveillance and detection measures for security concerns in the wake of 9/11 and the associated heightened security protocols.

As with the WQAL staff, the State of Ohio licenses and certifies the water plant operators who are charged with running and maintaining each of the three water treatment plants. These operators also perform the critical task of treatment and process monitoring to insure that the water leaving the plant is of the highest quality. In order to stay current in the ever-changing technical field of water purification, these operators spend many hours of continuing education in the classroom every year.

These operators, the Water Quality Assurance Laboratory staff, and all of the Division of Power & Water employees are dedicated to providing WATER, a life-sustaining resource, for the well-being and economic vitality of the community.
This is our mission.