

Milwaukee Water Works Releases Annual Water Quality Report

Water Quality Meets or Exceeds all State and Federal Standards

MILWAUKEE – The Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) released its [2021 Consumer Confidence Report](#) today, which details the results of tests for a variety of substances and shows that water distributed to nearly 900,000 consumers meets or exceeds all federal water quality standards.

*“Reliably providing clean and safe water that is of the highest quality is our top priority,” said **Public Works Commissioner Karen Dettmer**. We test for a wide range of potential contaminants and other substances – hundreds more than required – in order to promote public health and ensure that our customers can be confident in the quality of our water.”*

MWW regularly tests for 500 regulated and unregulated substances. The 2021 report includes test results for 26 federally regulated substances and 48 other substances that MWW detected in finished water in 2020 and 2021. The report also includes results for 34 additional unregulated “contaminants of concern” that MWW detected as part of a monitoring program to help determine if additional federal regulations are warranted.

Milwaukee’s water remains in compliance with the federal [Lead and Copper Rule](#), which sets a Lead Action Level at 15 parts per billion (ppb). MWW reported that the 90th percentile of lead levels, meaning 90% of water samples analyzed for lead, is 6.2 ppb or lower.

Milwaukee’s lead levels have dropped dramatically since 1996, when the utility began adding food grade phosphate to treated water. Ortho-phosphate forms a protective barrier on the inside of lead pipes or fixtures, reducing the amount of lead that can leach into water.

The report includes complete data on various per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances - collectively known as [PFAS](#) and commonly referred to as “forever chemicals” - that were detected. MWW tests for 45 different PFAS compounds and detected seven known compounds in 2021, including PFOS, PFOA, PFBA, PFHpA, PFHxS, PFHxA, and PFPeA.

The levels of PFAS compounds found in Milwaukee’s drinking water ranged from 0.7 parts per trillion (ppt) to 2.3 ppt. The Department of Natural Resources [approved](#) drinking water standards of 70 ppt for PFOA and PFOS in February. The state legislature has yet to codify these standards into law. There are no federal regulations for PFAS in drinking water.

Milwaukee Water Works pumps about 95 million gallons of water per day through a distribution system that serves Milwaukee and 15 surrounding communities. The report, along with detailed water sampling data, is available on the utility’s [web site](#).