

# 2018 Consumer Confidence Report

## For

### Merrimac Water Department

### Merrimac, Massachusetts

### MASSDEP PWSID # 3180000

This report is a snapshot of the drinking water quality that we provided last year. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to state and federal standards. We are committed to providing you with this information because informed customers are our best allies.

#### PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM INFORMATION

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#### Water System Improvements

Our water system is routinely inspected by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). MassDEP inspects our system for its technical, financial, and managerial capacity to provide safe drinking water to you. To ensure that we provide the highest quality of water available, your water system is operated by a Massachusetts certified operator who oversees the routine operations of our system. As part of our ongoing commitment to you, last year we made the following improvements to our system: Completed Attitash Water Main Replacement on Thorndike and Mountain Ave. Started to work with Mass DEP to increase our Daily Withdrawal Permit and to replace 40+ year old wells from 8" to 12" at Sargent's Pit.

#### Opportunities for Public Participation

If you would like to participate in discussions regarding your water quality, you may attend the following meetings or educational events: Public Power week/ First week in October

#### YOUR DRINKING WATER SOURCE

#### Where Does My Drinking Water Come From?

Your water is provided by the following sources listed below:

Source Name	MassDEP Source ID#	Source Type	Location of Source
East Main St.	3180000-04G	Groundwater	Wallace Way
Bear Hill (Sargent's Pit)	5054003-02G	Groundwater	Smith Street

#### Is My Water Treated?

We add Potassium Hydroxide for PH adjustment.

We add Potassium Permanganate to aid in Iron and Manganese removal.

We add Sodium Hypochlorite for disinfection.

We add Ortho Phosphate for corrosion control.

Our water system makes every effort to provide you with safe and pure drinking water. To improve the quality of the water delivered to you.

- We add a disinfectant to protect you against microbial contaminants.
- We filter the water to remove small particles and organisms such as sediment, algae and bacteria.
- We chemically treat the water to reduce levels of iron and manganese

The water quality of our system is constantly monitored by us and MassDEP to determine the effectiveness of existing water treatment and to determine if any additional treatment is required.

**How Are These Sources Protected?** Our water sources are protected by gate access to authorized personnel only. MassDEP has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for the water supply source(s) serving this water system. The SWAP Report assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies.

**What is My System's Ranking?**

A susceptibility ranking of moderate was assigned to this system using the information collected during the assessment by MassDEP.

**Where Can I See The SWAP Report?**

The complete SWAP report is available at the water department, board of health, and online at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/the-source-water-assessment-protection-swap-program> . For more information, call the Merrimac Water Department. At 978-346-8407

## SUBSTANCES FOUND IN TAP WATER

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 stormwater runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and farming.

**Pesticides and herbicides** -which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater 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 stormwater 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, the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

All 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).

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 some 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 and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on lowering the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

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 Merrimac Water Department 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 30 seconds to 2 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. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

**Maximum Contaminant Level (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 (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.

**Action Level (AL)** – The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

**90<sup>th</sup> Percentile** – Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level.

**Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL)** – These standards are developed to protect the aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

### **Unregulated Contaminants**

Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated monitoring is to assist EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

**Massachusetts Office of Research and Standards Guideline (ORSG)** – This is the concentration of a chemical in drinking water, at or below which, adverse health effects are unlikely to occur after chronic (lifetime) exposure. If exceeded, it serves as an indicator of the potential need for further action.

**Treatment Technique (TT)** – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**Running Annual Average (RAA)** – The average of four consecutive quarter of data.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)** -- The highest level of a disinfectant (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)** -- The level of a drinking water disinfectant (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) below which there is no known expected risk to health. MRDLG's do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**Level 1 Assessment** - A Level 1 assessment is a study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system.

**Level 2 Assessment** - A Level 2 assessment is a very detailed study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why an *E. coli* MCL violation has occurred and/or why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system on multiple occasions.

ppm = parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)  
ppb = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)

ppt = parts per trillion, or nanograms per liter  
 NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Units  
 ND = Not Detected  
 N/A = Not Applicable

## WATER QUALITY TESTING RESULTS

### What Does This Data Represent?

The water quality information presented in the table is from the most recent round of testing done in accordance with the regulations. All data shown was collected during the last calendar year unless otherwise noted in the table.

	Date(s) Collected	90 <sup>TH</sup> percentile	Action Level	MCLG	# of sites sampled	# of sites above Action Level	Possible Source of Contamination
Lead (ppb)	6/21/2018-8/8/2018+8/9/2018	0.0044	15	0	<b>20</b>	<b>None</b>	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (ppm)	6/21/2018-8/8/2018+8/9/2018	0.3111	1.3	1.3	<b>20</b>	<b>None</b>	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives

Turbidity	TT	Lowest Monthly % of Samples	Highest Detected Daily Value	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source of Contamination
Daily Compliance (NTU)	5	-----	<b>.20</b>	<b>N</b>	Soil runoff
Monthly Compliance*	At least 95%	<b>100%</b>	-----	<b>N</b>	
Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality.					
*Monthly turbidity compliance is related to a specific treatment technique (TT). Our system filters the water so at least 95% of our samples each month must be below the turbidity limits specified in the regulations.					

Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Highest Result or Highest Running Average Detected	Range Detected	MCL or MRDL	MCLG or MRDLG	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
<b>Inorganic Contaminants</b>							
Nitrate (ppm)	5/30/2018	0.60	0.39-0.60	10	10	<b>N</b>	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks; sewage; erosion of natural deposits
<b>Volatile Organic Contaminants</b>							
Benzene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	<b>N</b>	Discharge from factories; leaching from gas storage tanks and landfills
Carbon tetrachloride (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	<b>N</b>	Discharge from chemical plants and other industrial activities
o-Dichlorobenzene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	600	600	<b>N</b>	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
1,2-Dichloroethane (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	<b>N</b>	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
1,1-Dichloroethylene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	7	7	<b>N</b>	Discharge from industrial chemical factories

Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Highest Result or Highest Running Average Detected	Range Detected	MCL or MRDL	MCLG or MRDLG	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
cis-1,2-Dichloroethylene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	70	70	N	Breakdown product of trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene
trans-1,2-Dichloroethylene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	100	100	N	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
Dichloromethane (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	N	Discharge from pharmaceutical and chemical factories
1,2-Dichloropropane (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	N	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
Ethylbenzene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	700	700	N	Leaks and spills from gasoline and petroleum storage tanks
Styrene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	100	100	N	Discharge from rubber and plastic factories; leaching from landfills
Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	N	Discharge from factories and dry cleaners; residual of vinyl-lined water mains
1,2,4-Trichlorobenzene (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	70	70	N	Discharge from textile-finishing factories
1,1,1-Trichloroethane (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	200	200	N	Discharge from use in septic system cleaners
1,1,2-Trichloroethane (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	3	N	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
Trichloroethylene (TCE) (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	5	0	N	Discharge from metal degreasing sites and other factories
Toluene (ppm)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	1	1	N	Leaks and spills from gasoline and petroleum storage tanks; discharge from petroleum factories
Vinyl Chloride (ppb)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	2	0	N	Leaching from PVC piping; discharge from plastics factories
Xylenes (ppm)	8/1/2018	ND	ND	10	10	N	Leaks and spills from gasoline and petroleum storage tanks; discharge from petroleum factories; discharge from chemical factories
<b>Disinfectants and Disinfection By-Products</b>							
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)	8/1/2018	17	11-17	80	N/A	N	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	8/1/2018	4.6	4.6-9.7	60	N/A	N	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection

## 6. COMPLIANCE WITH DRINKING WATER REGS

### Does My Drinking Water Meet Current Health Standards?

We are committed to providing you with the best water quality available. We are proud to report that last year your drinking water met all applicable health standards regulated by the state and federal government.

## 7. EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

### Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention

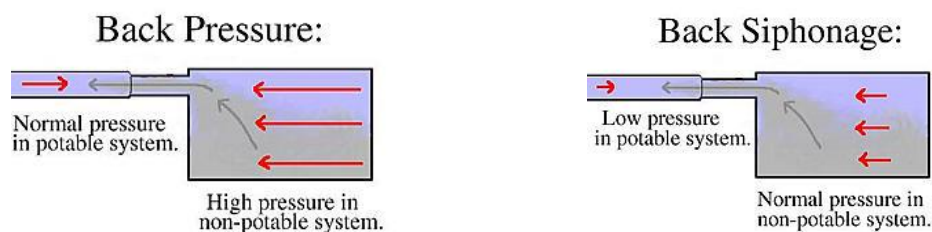
The Merrimac Water Department makes every effort to ensure that the water delivered to your home and business is clean, safe and free of contamination. Our staff works very hard to protect the quality of the water delivered to our customers from the time the water is extracted via deep wells from underground aquifers, throughout the entire treatment and distribution system. But what happens when the water reaches your home or business? Is there still a need to protect the water quality from contamination caused by a cross-connection? If so, how?

#### What is a cross-connection?

A cross-connection occurs whenever the drinking water supply is or could be in contact with potential sources of pollution or contamination. Cross-connections exist in piping arrangements or equipment that allows the drinking water to come in contact with non-potable liquids, solids, or gases (hazardous to humans) in event of a backflow.

#### What is a backflow?

Backflow is the undesired reverse of the water flow in the drinking water distribution lines. This backward flow of water can occur when the pressure created by equipment or a system such as a boiler or air-conditioning is higher than the water pressure inside the water distribution line (back pressure), or when the pressure in the distribution line drops due to routine occurrences such as water main breaks or heavy water demand causing the water to flow backward inside the water distribution system (back siphonage). Backflow is a problem that many water consumers are unaware of, a problem that each and every water customer has a responsibility to help prevent.



#### What can I do to help prevent a cross-connection?

Without the proper protection something as simple as a garden hose has the potential to contaminate or pollute the drinking water lines in your house. In fact over half of the country's cross-connection incidents involve unprotected garden hoses. There are very simple steps that you as a drinking water user can take to prevent such hazards, they are:

- NEVER submerge a hose in soapy water buckets, pet watering containers, pool, tubs, sinks, drains, or chemicals.
- NEVER attached a hose to a garden sprayer without the proper backflow preventer.
- Buy and install a hose bib vacuum breaker in any threaded water fixture. The installation can be as easy as attaching a garden hose to a spigot. This inexpensive device is available at most hardware stores and home-improvement centers.
- Identify and be aware of potential cross-connections to your water line.
- Buy appliances and equipment with backflow preventers.
- Buy and install backflow prevention devices or assemblies for all high and moderate hazard connections.

If you are the owner or manager of a property that is being used as a commercial, industrial, or institutional facility you must have your property's plumbing system surveyed for cross-connection by your water purveyor. If your property has NOT been surveyed for cross-connection, contact your water department to schedule a cross-connection survey.