



Presented By
City of Cotulla



ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2023

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TX019681-1

Este reporte incluye información importante sobre el agua para tomar. Para asistencia en español, favor de llamar al teléfono (830) 879-2367 or (830) 879-5812.

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Our Commitment

We are pleased to present to you this year's annual water quality report. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2023. Included are details about your source of water, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. Our constant goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water and providing you with this information because informed customers are our best allies.

Safeguard Your Drinking Water

Protection of drinking water is everyone's responsibility. You can help protect your community's drinking water source in several ways:

- Eliminate excess use of lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides – they contain hazardous chemicals that can reach your drinking water source.
- Pick up after your pets.
- If you have your own septic system, properly maintain it to reduce leaching to water sources, or consider connecting to a public water system.
- Dispose of chemicals properly; take used motor oil to a recycling center.
- Volunteer in your community. Find a watershed or wellhead protection organization in your community and volunteer to help. If there are no active groups, consider starting one. Use U.S. EPA's Adopt Your Watershed to locate groups in your community.
- Organize a storm drain stenciling project with others in your neighborhood. Stencil a message next to the street drain reminding people "Dump No Waste – Drains to River" or "Protect Your Water." Produce and distribute a flyer for households to remind residents that storm drains dump directly into your local water body.

Important Health Information

You may be more vulnerable than the general population to certain microbial contaminants, such as *cryptosporidium*, in drinking water. Infants, some elderly, or immunocompromised persons such as those undergoing chemotherapy for cancer; those who have undergone organ transplants; those who are undergoing treatment with steroids; and people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders can be particularly at risk from infections. You should seek advice about drinking water from your physician or health care provider. Additional guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *cryptosporidium* are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.



Where Does My Water Come From?

The City of Cotulla provides its customers with groundwater from the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, located in La Salle County.

Source Water Assessment

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) completed an assessment of your source water, and results indicate that some of our sources are susceptible to certain contaminants. The sampling requirements for your water system are based on this susceptibility and previous sample data. Any detections of these contaminants will be found in this Consumer Confidence Report. For more information on source water assessments and protection efforts at our system, contact Jimmy R. Oranday at (830) 879-5812.



Contaminants may be found in drinking water that may cause taste, color, or odor problems. These types of problems are not necessarily causes for health concerns. For more information on taste, odor, or color of drinking water, please contact our business office. For information about contaminants and potential health effects, call the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

Organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and which may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems;

Pesticides and Herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses;

Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or may result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;

Microbial Contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife;

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 can acquire naturally occurring minerals, in some cases radioactive material, and substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Substances that may be present in source water include:

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) prescribes regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. U.S. Food and Drug Administration 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 these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

Substances That Could Be in Water

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

You may not be aware of it, but every time you pour fat, oil, or grease (FOG) down your sink (e.g., bacon grease), you are contributing to a costly problem in the sewer collection system. FOG coats the inner walls of the plumbing in your house as well as the walls of underground piping throughout the community. Over time, these greasy materials build up and form blockages in pipes, which can lead to wastewater backing up into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains. These backups allow FOG to contaminate local waters, including drinking water. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public health hazard. FOG discharged into septic systems and drain fields can also cause malfunctions, resulting in more frequent tank pump-outs and other expenses.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year to unplug or replace grease-blocked pipes, repair pump stations, and clean up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Here are some tips that you and your family can follow to help maintain a well-run system now and in the future:

NEVER:

- Pour FOG down the house or storm drains.
- Dispose of food scraps by flushing them.
- Use the toilet as a wastebasket.

ALWAYS:

- Scrape and collect FOG into a waste container such as an empty coffee can, and dispose of it with your garbage.
- Place food scraps in waste containers or garbage bags for disposal with solid wastes.
- Place a wastebasket in each bathroom for solid wastes like disposable diapers, creams and lotions, and personal hygiene products, including nonbiodegradable wipes.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Jimmy R. Oranday, Utilities Superintendent, at (830) 879-2367 or (830) 879-5812.

Test Results

Our water is monitored for many different kinds of substances on a very strict sampling schedule, and the water we deliver must meet specific health standards. Here, we only show those substances that were detected in our water (a complete list of all our analytical results is available upon request). Remember that detecting a substance does not mean the water is unsafe to drink; our goal is to keep all detects below their respective maximum allowed levels.

The state recommends monitoring for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

The percentage of total organic carbon (TOC) removal was measured each month, and the system met all TOC removal requirements set (unless a TOC violation is noted in the Violation column).

REGULATED SUBSTANCES	SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
	Arsenic (ppb)	2022	10	0	2.1	ND-2.1	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Runoff from orchards; Runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
	Barium (ppm)	2022	2	2	0.0884	0.0714-0.0884	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
	Combined Radium (pCi/L)	2021	5	0	1.5	1.5-1.5	No	Erosion of natural deposits
	Fecal Coliform and <i>E. coli</i> (positive samples)	2023	TT	0	0	NA	No	Human and animal fecal waste
	Selenium (ppb)	2022	50	50	7.6	6.5-7.6	No	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from mines
	Total Coliform Bacteria (positive samples)	2023	TT	NA	2	NA	No	Naturally present in the environment
	Trihalomethanes]-Stage 1 (ppb)	2023	80	NA	11	10.5-10.5	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
SECONDARY SUBSTANCES	SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH %ILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
	Copper (ppm)	2022	1.3	0.061	0/20	0/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
	Lead (ppb)	2022	15	0.7	0/20	0/20	No	Lead service lines; Corrosion of household plumbing systems, including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits
FLUORIDE (ppm)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE	
2023	2023	2.0	NA	0.44	0.41-0.44	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories	

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

Routine and repeat samples are total coliform-positive and either is *E. coli*-positive, or system fails to take repeat samples following *E. coli*-positive routine sample, or system fails to analyze total coliform-positive repeat sample for *E. coli*.

About Our Violations

1. Violation Type: Monitor GWR, Triggered/Additional, Major

Violation Began: December 21, 2023

Violation Ended: December 31, 2023

Violation Explanation

We failed to collect follow-up samples within 24 hours of learning of the total coliform-positive samples. These needed to be tested for fecal indicators from all sources that were being used at the time the positive sample was collected.

Public Notification Rule

The Public Notification Rule helps to ensure that consumers will always know there is a problem with their drinking water. These notices immediately alert consumers if there is a serious problem with their drinking water (e.g., a boil water emergency).

2. Violation Type: Public Notice Rule Linked to Violation

Violation Began: October 2, 2023

Violation Ended: November 14, 2023

Violation Explanation: We failed to adequately notify you, our drinking water consumers, about a violation of the drinking water regulations.

Fecal coliform and *E. coli* are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, and people with severely compromised immune systems.

Water Main Flushing

Distribution mains (pipes) convey water to homes, businesses, and hydrants in your neighborhood. The water entering distribution mains is of very high quality; however, water quality can deteriorate in areas of the distribution mains over time. Water main flushing is the process of cleaning the interior of water distribution mains by sending a rapid flow of water through them.

Flushing maintains water quality in several ways. For example, flushing removes sediments like iron and manganese. Although iron and manganese do not pose health concerns, they can affect the taste, clarity, and color of the water. Additionally, sediments can shield microorganisms from the disinfecting power of chlorine, contributing to the growth of microorganisms within distribution mains. Flushing helps remove stale water and ensures the presence of fresh water with sufficient dissolved oxygen and disinfectant levels and an acceptable taste and smell. During flushing operations in your neighborhood, some short-term deterioration of water quality, though uncommon, is possible. You should avoid tap water for household uses at that time. If you do use the tap, allow your cold water to run for a few minutes at full velocity before use and avoid using hot water to prevent sediment accumulation in your hot water tank. Please contact us if you have any questions or if you would like more information on our water main flushing schedule.

Tap vs. Bottled

Thanks in part to aggressive marketing, the bottled water industry has successfully convinced us all that water purchased in bottles is a healthier alternative to tap water. However, according to a four-year study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water. In fact, about 40 percent of bottled water is actually just tap water, according to government estimates.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for regulating bottled water, but these rules allow for less rigorous testing and purity standards than those required by the U.S. EPA for community tap water. For instance, the high mineral content of some bottled waters makes them unsuitable for babies and young children. Further, the FDA completely exempts bottled water that is packaged and sold within the same state, which accounts for about 70 percent of all bottled water sold in the United States.

People spend 10,000 times more per gallon for bottled water than they typically do for tap water. If you get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to \$1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about 49 cents. Even if you installed a filter device on your tap, you would spend far less than what you pay for bottled water. For a detailed discussion on the NRDC study results, visit go.nrdc.org.



Level 1 Assessment Update

Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, waterborne pathogens may be present or that a potential pathway exists through which contamination may enter the drinking water distribution system. We found coliforms, indicating the need to look for potential problems in water treatment or distribution. When this occurs, we are required to conduct an assessment to identify and correct any problems.

During the past year, we were required to conduct one Level 1 assessment. We completed one Level 1 assessment. In addition, we were required to take three corrective actions, and we completed all three of these actions.

Lead in Home Plumbing

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. This water supply is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but we 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 two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to do for tap water. If you get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to \$1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about 49 cents. Even if you installed a filter device on your tap, you would spend far less than what you pay for bottled water. For a detailed discussion on the NRDC study results, visit go.nrdc.org.

ppb (parts per billion): One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

ppm (parts per million): One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

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

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

NA: Not applicable.

ND (Not detected): Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

PCIL (picocuries per liter): A measure of radioactivity.

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MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal): The level of a disinfectant below which drinking water disinfectant residual there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level): 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.

MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal): 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.

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.

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.

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

90th %ile: The levels reported for lead and copper represent the 90th percentile of the total number of sites tested. The 90th percentile is equal to or greater than 90% of our lead and copper detections.

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