

Consumer Confidence Report 2017

City of Great Falls, Public Drinking Water Supply

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This report is prepared annually by the City of Great Falls Water Utility. Its purpose is to inform the public about the quality of our municipal drinking water. Please take a few minutes to review it and feel free to call us with any questions.

The source of our water

The drinking water used by the residents of Great Falls, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB), and Black Eagle is sourced from the Missouri River and treated at our water treatment facility to make it safe to drink. The treatment facility is located just up gradient from the Missouri's confluence with the Sun River in Great Falls.

Water treatment and purification

Great Falls utilizes a conventional water treatment process, producing on average 4.5 billion gallons of safe drinking water per year. The process is monitored continuously both electronically and with grab samples of treated water. Only after careful scrutiny is water allowed to flow through underground water mains to reservoirs for use in homes and businesses. City water personnel stay abreast of new Federal and State drinking water regulations so that treatment and/or monitoring changes can be implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner. The City is committed to the goal of providing its citizens with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. This goal was achieved during 2017 by operating without any violations or variances regarding our finished water quality.

What contaminants are present in our source water?

Water that precipitates from the atmosphere flows across the surface of the land and/or percolates through the soil. Naturally occurring minerals dissolve and those, along with waste substances produced by plants, animals and humans are picked up. The water then either becomes groundwater or makes its way to a stream, river, pond, lake or reservoir. This accumulated water can then be used as a drinking water source.

Contaminants that may need to be removed from source water before it can be considered safe to drink include:

- Microbial contaminants including viruses, bacteria, and protozoa. These can originate from sewage treatment plants, leaky septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants such as salts and metals. These can be naturally occurring or the result of urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and/or farming.

- Pesticides and herbicides. These may come from a variety of sources including agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and/or residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals. These are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and/or septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants. These can be naturally occurring, the result of oil and gas production, and/or the result mining activities.

Montana's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) completed the Great Falls source water delineation and assessment report. This report delineates a source water protection area for Great Falls (an area of surface water and land that contributes water to the Great Falls Public Water Supply). It also identifies locations or within this area where contaminants might be generated, stored and/or transported and addresses their potential for contributing contamination to the Great Falls drinking water. The report can be used to develop a source water protection plan for Great Falls.

Do I need to take special precautions?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes regulations setting allowable limits for contaminants in drinking water delivered by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration regulates contaminants in bottled water, affording equivalent protection to public health. Any drinking water may be reasonably expected to contain allowable amounts of some contaminants. It's important to remember that the presence of these contaminants does not necessarily mean the water will pose a health risk. Detailed information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or our local City-County Health Department (454-6950).

Some individuals may be more sensitive to certain contaminants present in the drinking water than the general population. For example, immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons having HIV/AIDS (or other immune system disorders), some elderly, and infants may exhibit a higher risk of infection brought on by specific microbiological contaminants. These people should seek advice about their drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

How can I become involved?

You can learn more about your local water utility by attending any of the regularly scheduled City Commission meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Great Falls Civic Center. You may also arrange a tour of the local water treatment plant by calling 727-1325. Regulatory updates and other interesting information can be found by visiting the American Water Works Association web site at <http://www.awwa.org>.

Questions & Answers

Q: How often is our drinking water tested?

A: The type and frequency of testing required is based on the water's source and the number of people served. Great Falls is classified as a medium-sized (between 50,000 and 100,000 served) surface water (Missouri River) community public water supply. As such, Great Falls is required to continually monitor the levels of some drinking water constituents (e.g. disinfectant residual). Other constituents, such as radionuclides, are required to be tested only once every several years. The data presented in the tables contained in this report are the results from the most recent testing completed in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Q: Why does the water coming out of my tap have a milky appearance sometimes but then clears up in my glass after a few seconds?

A: The water coming into your home may contain air held in solution by the pressure of the water system. As the water leaves the tap, the pressure rapidly decreases causing millions of tiny air bubbles to be suspended in the water, thereby producing the milky appearance. The water then clears from the bottom of the container as the air bubbles rise and return to the atmosphere.

Q: How hard is Great Falls water?

A: Great Falls water is classified as moderately hard, ranging from 127 to 167 milligrams per liter as calcium carbonate or 7.4 to 9.8 grains per gallon. Some households install water softeners as a matter of personal preference but softening is generally not necessary.

Some Facts about Water

Of the 326 million cubic miles of water on earth, approximately 97% is seawater, 2% is frozen, and 1% is suitable for drinking water. This amounts to each person on our planet having enough fresh water to fill a cube 130 feet on a side; however, the water is not evenly distributed and is in constant demand. One gallon of water weighs about 8½ pounds. Average total water use (both indoor and outdoor) for a typical single-family home is about 100 gallons per person per day. You can fill an 8-ounce glass with drinking water 15,000 times for the same cost as a six-pack of soda. You can survive about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water.

Water Analysis Data

Data tables on the following pages contain terms and abbreviations with which you may be unfamiliar. In order to help you better understand this data we offer the following definitions and explanations:

parts per million (ppm) or milligrams per Liter (mg/L) - one part per million is approximately equivalent to one minute in two years or equal to one penny in \$10,000.

parts per billion (ppb) or micrograms per Liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) - one part per billion is approximately equivalent to one minute in 2,000 years or equal to one penny in \$10,000,000.

picocuries per Liter (pCi/L) - a measure of radioactivity per volume of water.

millirems per year (mrem/yr) - a measure of radiation exposure. In the United States, the average person is exposed to an effective dose equivalent of approximately 360 mrem (whole body exposure) per year from all sources.

Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) - a measure of the clarity of water. Water having turbidity in excess of 5 NTU would appear noticeably cloudy to the average person.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal - the "Goal" (MCLG) is 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.

Maximum Contaminant Level - the "Maximum Allowed" (MCL) is 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 Residual Disinfection Level Goal or MRDLG - the level of a 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.

Maximum Residual Disinfection Level or MRDL - the highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that the addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

Action Level (AL) - the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers additional treatment(s) or other requirements which a water system must follow.

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

Variances and Exemptions – State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.

The City of Great Falls routinely monitors for contaminants in drinking water according to Federal and State laws. The four data tables included in this report document the test results from monitoring during the period of January 1st through December 31st, 2017. The State of Montana requires monitoring for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently; therefore, some of the following data parameters, though representative, are more than one year old. The tables are presented as follows:

Table I.	Regulated Contaminants Detected
Table II.	Unregulated Contaminants Detected
Table III.	Regulated Contaminants Not Detected

Additional report copies are available free of charge from the Great Falls Water Treatment Plant. An electronic copy can be found at <https://greatfallsmt.net/ccr2017>.

If you have any questions about this report or your water utility, please contact Nate Shumate (Water Quality Specialist) or Wayne Lovelis (Plant Manager) at (406) 727-1325.

Table I. Regulated Contaminants - Detected						
Contaminant	Likely Source	MCL	MCLG	Date Sampled	Level Detected	Violation Yes or No
Arsenic	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards and glass and electronics production wastes.	0.01 ppm	0 ppm	1/10/17	0.001 ppm	No
Fluoride	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.	4 ppm	4 ppm	1/10/17	0.8 ppm	No
Nitrate plus Nitrite as Nitrogen	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits.	10 ppm	10 ppm	1/10/17	0.20 ppm	No
Lead <i>Note: In samples collected 1/10/17 no lead was detected in the treated water as it left the water treatment plant.</i>	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits.	AL = 15 ppb 90 th percentile level must be less than 15 ppb	0 ppb	6/16 to 9/16	5 ppb @ 90 th percentile (see below)	No
Copper <i>Note: In samples collected 1/10/17 no copper was detected in the treated water as it left the water treatment plant.</i>	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives.	AL = 1.3 ppm 90 th percentile level must be less than 1.3 ppm	1.3 ppm	6/16 to 9/16	0.625 ppm @ 90 th percentile one site exceeded 1.3 ppm	No
DISINFECTANTS						
Contaminant	Likely Source	MRDL	MRDLG	Sampled	Level Detected	Violation Yes or No
Chlorine	water additive used to control microbes	4 ppm	4 ppm	continuously	0.03 to 1.93 ppm	No
Chloramines†	water additive used to control microbes	4 ppm	4 ppm	continuously	0.03 to 1.93 ppm	No
† The primary disinfectant used in Great Falls is free chlorine. Through the addition of ammonia, monochloramine is formed just before the water exits the treatment plant. Monochloramine does not dissipate as readily as free chlorine and thus helps maintain disinfection at the far reaches of the distribution system. Compared to free chlorine, monochloramine is a weak oxidizer and so minimizes the formation of disinfection by-products.						
Contaminant	Likely Source of Contamination	MCL	MCLG	Date Sampled	Level Detected	Violation Yes or No
Turbidity Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is monitored because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the water filtration system.	Soil runoff	TT = 1 NTU maximum; TT < 0.15 NTU 95% of the time	0	Throughout the year every 4 hours manually; every 15 minutes electronically	0.163 NTU on 10/15/17 <0.15 NTU 99% of time	No No
RADIONUCLIDES						
Beta/Photon Emitters	decay of natural and man-made deposits	4 mrem/yr	0 mrem/yr	2/23/99	2.7 (± 2.7) pCi/l gross beta	No
Gross Alpha	erosion of natural deposits	15 pCi/L	0 pCi/L	7/1/14	4.1	No
Radium 226 + Radium 228	erosion of natural deposits	5 pCi/L	0 pCi/L	7/1/14	<0.5	No
Uranium	erosion of natural deposits	0.03 ppm	0 ppm	7/1/14	0.001	No
Synthetic Organic Contaminants Including Pesticides and Herbicides						
Contaminant	Likely Source of Contamination	MCL	MCLG	Date Sampled	Level Detected	Violation Yes or No
Hexachlorocyclopentadiene	discharge from chemical factories	50 ppb	50 ppb	6/13/16	<0.10	No

LEAD AND COPPER RULE SAMPLING SUMMARY (triennial samples)

Note:

Each sample collected for lead analysis was also analyzed for copper. In this report the sites are separately numbered 1-32 based on ascending levels of lead or copper; that is, the site having the highest level of lead did not necessarily display the highest level of copper.

Site Ranking	Copper results in ascending order in ppm	Lead results in ascending order in ppb	Table I. Regulated Contaminants Detected (continued)
1	0.013	0	
2	0.026	0	
3	0.027	0	
4	0.035	0	
5	0.041	0	
6	0.052	0	
7	0.053	0	
8	0.057	0	
9	0.062	0	
10	0.072	0	
11	0.087	0	
12	0.089	0	
13	0.097	0	
14	0.101	0	
15	0.106	1	
16	0.147	1	
17	0.157	1	
18	0.158	1	
19	0.195	1	
20	0.198	1	
21	0.209	1	
22	0.232	1	
23	0.262	2	
24	0.284	2	
25	0.295	3	
26	0.314	3	
27	0.523	3	
28	0.613	5	
29	0.636	5	
30	0.740	6	
31	1.020	8	
32	1.740	8	
90th Percentile	0.625 ppm	5 ppb	

Table I. Regulated Contaminants - Detected (Continued)

Disinfection By-Products (DBPs)									
Contaminant		Likely Source of Contamination			MCL		Date Sampled	Level Detected	Violation
TTHMs (total trihalomethanes)		by-product of drinking water disinfection			80 loc. avg. [‡]		quarterly	see table below	No
HAA5s (five haloacetic acids)		by-product of drinking water disinfection			60 loc. avg. [‡]		quarterly	see table below	No
TTHM Summary	Site #1	Site #2	Site #3	Site #4	Site #5	Site #6	Site #7	Site #8	
1st Quarter 2017	24 ppb	27 ppb	24 ppb	29 ppb	27 ppb	24 ppb	26 ppb	29 ppb	
2nd Quarter 2017	46 ppb	47 ppb	43 ppb	47 ppb	49 ppb	45 ppb	47 ppb	47 ppb	
3rd Quarter 2017	59 ppb	69 ppb	65 ppb	65 ppb	66 ppb	62 ppb	65 ppb	61 ppb	
4th Quarter 2017	70 ppb	67 ppb	61 ppb	61 ppb	62 ppb	57 ppb	63 ppb	67 ppb	
[‡]locational average	49.8 ppb	52.5 ppb	48.3 ppb	50.5 ppb	51.0 ppb	47.0 ppb	50.3 ppb	51.0 ppb	
highest compliance level for 2017 = 52.5 ppb range = 47.0 to 52.5 ppb									
Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.									
HAA5 Summary	Site #1	Site #2	Site #3	Site #4	Site #5	Site #6	Site #7	Site #8	
1st Quarter 2017	25 ppb	26 ppb	26 ppb	17 ppb	26 ppb	29 ppb	23 ppb	21 ppb	
2nd Quarter 2017	45 ppb	47 ppb	43 ppb	43 ppb	46 ppb	46 ppb	44 ppb	46 ppb	
3rd Quarter 2017	52 ppb	10 ppb	49 ppb	49 ppb	48 ppb	52 ppb	44 ppb	53 ppb	
4th Quarter 2017	62 ppb	18 ppb	55 ppb	37 ppb	52 ppb	57 ppb	52 ppb	39 ppb	
[‡]locational average	46.0 ppb	25.3 ppb	43.3 ppb	36.5 ppb	43.0 ppb	46.0 ppb	40.8 ppb	39.8 ppb	
highest compliance level for 2017 = 46.0 ppb range = 25.3 to 46.0 ppb									
Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.									

TOC (Total Organic Carbon)

Total Organic Carbon (TOC) provides a medium for the formation of disinfection by-products, which include TTHMs and HAA5s. Removing TOC at the water treatment plant is important in reducing the potential for the formation of all disinfection by-products, both regulated and unregulated.

Date Sampled	River Water TOC	Treated Water TOC	% Removal Required (A)	% Removal Achieved (B)	Compliance Ratio (B/A)*
1/9/17	2.5 mg/L	2.0 mg/L	15.0	20.0	1.33
2/7/17	2.4 mg/L	1.8 mg/L	15.0	25.0	1.67
3/6/17	2.3 mg/L	1.7 mg/L	15.0	26.1	1.74
4/6/17	2.3 mg/L	1.9 mg/L	15.0	17.4	1.16
5/4/17	2.6 mg/L	1.9 mg/L	15.0	26.9	1.79
6/6/17	2.5 mg/L	1.8 mg/L	15.0	28.0	1.87
7/6/17	3.3 mg/L	2.4 mg/L	15.0	27.3	1.82
8/3/17	3.2 mg/L	2.4 mg/L	15.0	25.0	1.67
9/7/17	3.3 mg/L	2.5 mg/L	15.0	24.2	1.62
10/5/17	3.5 mg/L	2.6 mg/L	15.0	25.7	1.71
11/2/17	3.5 mg/L	2.9 mg/L	15.0	17.1	1.14
12/4/17	3.2 mg/L	2.2 mg/L	15.0	31.3	2.08

*Compliance is based, in part, upon the yearly average compliance ratio being equal to or > 1.0. In 2017, the average compliance ratio was 1.63.

Secondary Parameter	Date Sampled	Level Detected	SMCL**	** Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) - a chemical contaminant in excess of this amount may affect aesthetic qualities and public acceptance. SMCLs are non-enforceable standards.
Calcium	1/10/17	39 mg/L	NA	
Magnesium	1/10/17	12 mg/L	NA	
Sodium	1/10/17	19 mg/L	< 20 recommended	
Total Hardness as CaCO ₃	1/10/17	146 mg/L	NA	
Total Alkalinity as CaCO ₃	1/10/17	122 mg/L	NA	
Conductivity	1/10/17	372 umhos/cm	NA	
pH	1/10/17	7.3 s.u.	6.5 - 8.5	
Langelier Index	1/10/17	- 0.4	NA	

Inorganic Contaminant	Date Sampled	Level Detected	SMCL	
Aluminum	1/10/17	0.08 mg/L	NA	
Bicarbonate as HCO ₃	1/10/17	149 mg/L	NA	
Chloride	1/10/17	13 mg/L	250	
Potassium	1/10/17	3 mg/L	NA	
Silica	1/10/17	17.7 mg/L	NA	
Strontium	1/10/17	0.22 mg/L	NA	
Sulfate	1/10/17	49 mg/L	250	
Radionuclides	Date Sampled	Level Detected	Unit of Measurement	Significance
Radon-222 *	1/09/95	47 (± 37)	pCi/l	see comments below

Total Coliform Bacteria	Escherichia coli				
Antimony	Cadmium	Cyanide	Manganese	Nickel	Thallium
Asbestos (5/24/11)	Chromium	Iron	Mercury	Selenium	Zinc
Beryllium	Copper	Lead	Molybdenum	Silver	
Benzene	1,1-Dichloroethene	Styrene	Toluene		
Carbon tetrachloride	cis-1,2-Dichloroethene	Tetrachloroethene	Vinyl chloride		
Chlorobenzene	trans-1,2-Dichloroethene	1,2,4-Trichlorobenzene	Xylenes (ortho-, meta-, para-)		
1,2-Dichlorobenzene	Methylene chloride	1,1,1-Trichloroethane	1,2-Dibromo-3-chloropropane		
1,4-Dichlorobenzene	1,2-Dichloropropane	1,1,2-Trichloroethane	1,2-Dibromoethane		
1,2-Dichloroethane	Ethylbenzene	Trichloroethene			

Table III. Regulated Contaminants - NOT Detected (Continued)

Volatile Organic Contaminants (VOCs) – all tested 6/6/17			
Bromobenzene	2-Chlorotoluene	cis-1,3-Dichloropropene	1,1,2,2-Tetrachloroethane
Bromochloromethane	4-Chlorotoluene	trans-1,3-Dichloropropene	1,2,3-Trichlorobenzene
Bromoform	Dibromomethane	Hexachlorobutadiene	Trichlorofluoromethane
Bromomethane	1,3-Dichlorobenzene	Isopropylbenzene	1,2,3-Trichloropropane
n-Butylbenzene	Dichlorodifluoromethane	p-Isopropyltoluene	1,2,4-Trimethylbenzene
sec-Butylbenzene	1,1-Dichloroethane	Methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE)	1,3,5-Trimethylbenzene
tert-Butylbenzene	1,3-Dichloropropane	Naphthalene	m+p Xylenes
Chloroethane	2,2-Dichloropropane	n-Propylbenzene	o-Xylene
Chloromethane	1,1-Dichloropropene	1,1,1,2-Tetrachloroethane	

In Summary, analysis of Great Falls drinking water revealed no violations during 2017. Although some constituents were detected, the Environmental Protection Agency considers water to be safe at those levels. Furthermore, MCLs are set very stringently. To put this into perspective, for a given regulated contaminant a person would have to drink 2 liters of water every day at the MCL for a lifetime for there to be a one-in-a-million chance of having a corresponding adverse health effect.

Important additional information regarding source water monitoring: During 2007 Great Falls collected monthly water samples directly from the Missouri River intake and had them analyzed for *Cryptosporidium*, a microbial pathogen found in surface water throughout the United States. Although the filtration portion of our water treatment process removes *Cryptosporidium*, it cannot guarantee 100% removal. Results from this monitoring indicated the presence of these organisms in our source water during the months of February, April, July, September, October and December.

A second round of monitoring our source water for *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* commenced in October of 2015 and ran throughout September of 2017. Laboratory results indicated that of the 24 months sampled, *Cryptosporidium* was only present in our source water in October 2015 and September and October of 2016. *Cryptosporidium* was not detected in any source water samples submitted for analysis in 2017.

Current test methods do not allow us to determine whether the detected organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease. Ingestion of *Cryptosporidium* may cause cryptosporidiosis, an abdominal infection. Symptoms of infection include nausea, diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the disease within a few weeks. However, immuno-compromised people are at greater risk of developing life-threatening illness. We encourage immuno-compromised individuals to consult their doctor regarding appropriate precautions to consider to avoid infection. *Cryptosporidium* must be ingested to cause disease and it may be spread through means other than drinking water.

The Long Term 2 (LT2) Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule requires an additional 1 log removal of *Cryptosporidium* from the source water. The City of Great Falls is currently in the process of making capital improvements by installing an Ultra Violet treatment system in order to consistently achieve this removal. In the meantime, we have consistently met the additional 1 log removal requirement through filtration and the City of Great Falls will strive to continue to meet the requirements of LT2.