Drinking Water Quality Report 2012

If you have questions about Grand Rapids Public Utilities drinking water or would like information about opportunities for public participation in decisions that may affect the quality of the water, please contact:

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GRAND RAPIDS
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Utility Information

The Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission (GRPUC) was established in 1910. The GRPUC provides leadership for the municipal utility by establishing policy, managing capital investments, and organizing the business framework.

Commission members include President Steve Welliver, Secretary Glen Hodgson, Commissioners Greg Chandler, Ed Zabinski, and Wayne Lenius. We welcome your participation in the public forum section of our regular monthly meetings which are generally held on the first Wednesday after the tenth of the month at the PW/PUC service center.

The GRPUC is issuing the results of monitoring done on its drinking water for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2012. The purpose of this report is to advance consumers' understanding of drinking water and heighten awareness of the need to protect precious water resources.

The GRPUC provides drinking water to its residents from a groundwater source: five wells ranging from 140 to 572 feet deep, that draw water from the Quaternary Buried Artesian, Animikie Group, and Quaternary Buried Unconfined aquifers.

Grand Rapids

No contaminants were detected at levels that violated federal drinking water standards. However, some contaminants were detected in trace amounts that were within legal limits. The table below shows the contaminants that were detected in trace amounts in 2012.

Monitoring may have been done for additional contaminants that do not have MCLs established for them and are not required to be monitored under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Results may be available by calling 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818-9318 during normal business hours.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. 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 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 at 1-800-426-4791. The water provided to customers may meet drinking water standards, but the Minnesota Department of Health has also made a determination as to how vulnerable the source of water may be to future contamination incidents. If you wish to obtain the entire source water assessment regarding your drinking water, please call 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818- 9318 (and press 5) during normal business hours. Also, you can view it online at **www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/swa**

Key to Abbreviations

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.

Level Detected: This is the value used to determine compliance with federal standards. It sometimes is the highest value detected and sometimes is an average of all the detected values. If it is an average, it may contain sampling results from the previous year.

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

90% Level- 90th Percentile Level: This is the value obtained after disregarding 10 percent of the samples taken that had the highest levels. For example, in a situation in which 10 samples were taken, the 90th percentile level is determined by disregarding the highest result, which represents 10 percent of the samples.

ppm: Parts per million. This can also be expressed as milligrams per liter (mg/l).

ppb: Parts per billion. This can also be expressed as micrograms per liter (µg/l).

N/A: Not applicable (does not apply).

Substance *(units)*	MCL	MCLG	Level Detected	Range	Major Source of Contaminant
Fluoride *(ppm)*	4	4	1.23	1.1-1.3	State of MN requires all municipal water systems to add fluoride to the drinking water to promote strong teeth; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
Nitrate (as Nitrogen) *(ppm)*	10.4	10.4	0.2	N/A	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks; sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.
Total Coliform Bacteria	>1 present	0 present	3*	N/A	Naturally present in the environment.
Substance *(units)*	**AL**	**MCLG**	**90% Level**	**Sites Over AL**	**Major Source of Contaminant**
Copper *(ppm)*	1.3	1.3	1.03	0 of 20 sites	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.
Lead *(ppb)*	15	0	3.8	0 of 20 sites	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.

* Follow-up sampling found no contamination present

The sources of drinking water (both tap 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 materials 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 or 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 the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

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 Grand Rapids 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.**

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 infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. 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.

Make A Difference

You can save water by following these tips:

Indoors

- Check your toilet for "silent" leaks by placing a little food coloring in the tank and seeing if it leaks into the bowl.
- Keep a gallon of drinking water in the refrigerator rather than running the tap for coldwater. This also makes the water taste better.
- Run your washing machine with a full load of clothes in cold water when possible

Outdoors

- Use drought-tolerant plants and grasses for landscaping and reduce grass-covered areas.
- Cut your grass at least two to three inches high to shade the roots, making it more drought tolerant; keep your mower sharp for the healthiest grass.
- Install a rain sensor on the irrigation system.
- If your grass springs back when you step on it, it doesn't need watering.
- If it rains one inch or more, wait at least five days to water again.
- Use a sprinkler that delivers large drops, rather than a fine mist.

- Let the clippings lie on the ground. This shades the soil to prevent evaporation.
- Let your lawn go dormant during the hot summer months. This saves money and time spent mowing.
- Spread mulch around flowerbeds, shrubs and trees. This will reduce the water requirements for your landscape.

For more information log on to:
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water
or
www.mrwa.com