

# CITY OF CHICAGO • 2020 WATER QUALITY REPORT



**New Chicago Department of Water Management Water Purification Laboratories**

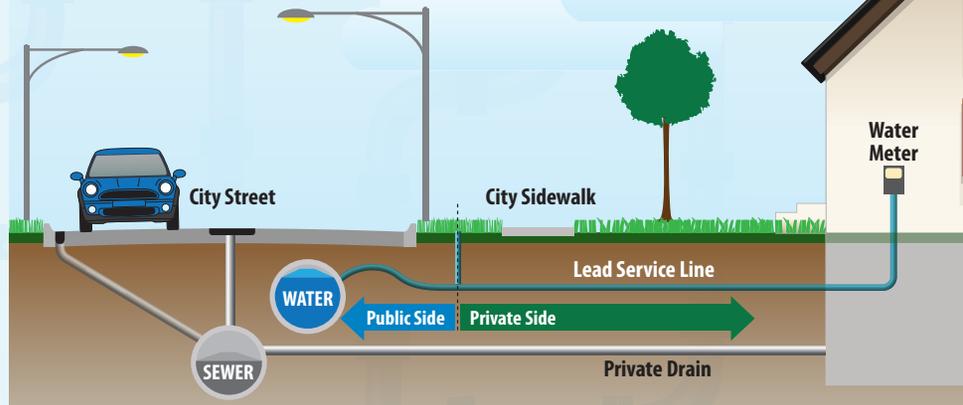


Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor  
City of Chicago



Andrea Cheng, PhD, Acting Commissioner  
Department of Water Management

Until 1986, lead service lines were installed in houses and two-flats throughout Chicago. As a result, we have approximately 400,000 locations with lead lines – more than any other city. Our water meets or exceeds all standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency for safe, clean drinking water due to the corrosion control added by the city. However, in some homes, an elevated lead level has been detected.



**Take the following steps to promote maximum water quality in your home:**



1 Flush your water for 5 minutes if it hasn't been used in the house for 6 or more hours



2 Clean faucet aerators regularly



3 Call 311 and request a free water test from the Dept. of Water Management



4 Visit [www.LeadSafeChicago.org](http://www.LeadSafeChicago.org) to see if you qualify for a free water pitcher and six cartridges



5 Consider replacing your lead service line

Chicago now has launched two options to assist residents who want to replace their lead service lines:

**HOMEOWNER-INITIATED LSLR PROGRAM**

**Waiver for standard permit fees for LSLR up to \$3,100**

The City will waive the costs of standard permit fees for homeowners replacing their lead service lines as a standalone project.

This program is open to:

- All ownership statuses (primary or secondary homes/rental properties)
- All income levels
- All drinking water lead concentrations

**EQUITY LSLR PROGRAM**

**Free lead service line replacement for low-income homeowners**

You may qualify if you:

- Own and live in your home
- Have a household income below 80% of the area median income (\$74,550 for a family of four)
- Have persistent elevated lead concentrations in your water based on free Department of Water Management testing



# CITY OF CHICAGO, DEPARTMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT (DWM) SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT SUMMARY FOR THE 2020 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT (CCR)

This year, as in years past, your tap water met all USEPA and state drinking water health standards. Our system vigilantly safeguards its source water supply. This report summarizes the quality of water that we provided last year, including details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. We are committed to providing you with this information because informed customers are our best allies.

## SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The Illinois EPA implemented a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) to assist with watershed protection of public drinking water supplies. The SWAP inventories potential sources of contamination and determined the susceptibility of the source water to contamination. The Illinois EPA has completed the Source Water Assessment Program for our supply.

## SOURCE WATER LOCATION

The City of Chicago utilizes Lake Michigan as its source water via two water treatment plants. The Jardine Water Purification Plant serves the northern areas of the City and suburbs, while the Sawyer Water Purification Plant serves the southern areas of the City and suburbs. Lake Michigan is the only Great Lake that is entirely contained within the United States. It borders Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and is the second largest Great Lake by volume with 1,180 cubic miles of water and third largest by area.

## SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CONTAMINATION

The Illinois EPA considers all surface water sources of community water supply to be susceptible to potential pollution problems. The very nature of surface water allows contaminants to migrate into the intake with no protection, only dilution. This is the reason for mandatory treatment of all surface water supplies in Illinois. Chicago's offshore intakes are located at a distance, that shoreline impacts are not usually considered a factor on water quality. At certain times of the year, however, the potential for contamination exists due to wet-weather flows and river reversals. In addition, the placement of the crib structures may serve to attract waterfowl, gulls and terns that frequent the Great Lakes area, thereby concentrating fecal deposits at the intake and thus compromising the source water quality. Conversely, the shore intakes are highly susceptible to storm water runoff, marinas and shoreline point sources due to the influx of groundwater to the lake.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[www.cityofchicago.org/watermanagement](http://www.cityofchicago.org/watermanagement)

**E-MAIL:** [water@cityofchicago.org](mailto:water@cityofchicago.org)

**WATER IN THE STREET OR BASEMENT**  
Call 311

**WATER QUALITY QUESTIONS**  
(312) 744-8190

**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**  
**WATER BILL QUESTIONS**  
(312) 744-4426

**IEPA'S REGIONAL OFFICES (ILLINOIS)**  
(847) 608-3131

**EPA'S SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE**  
(800) 426-4791

**EPA'S GENERAL INFORMATION LINE**  
(312) 353-2000

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Andrea Cheng, PhD, Acting Commissioner  
at 312-742-2406

City of Chicago Department of Water Management  
Bureau of Water Supply  
1000 East Ohio Street • Chicago, IL 60611  
Attn: Andrea Cheng

<http://dataservices.epa.illinois.gov/swap/factsheet.aspx>

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

*This notice is being sent to you by: The City of Chicago, Department of Water Management Water System ID# IL0316000*

# DETECTED CONTAMINANTS

Contaminant (unit of measure) Typical Source of Contaminant	MCLG	MCL	Highest Level Detected	Range of Detections	Violation	Date of Sample
<b>MICROBIAL CONTAMINANTS</b>						
TOTAL COLIFORM BACTERIA (% pos/mo) Naturally present in the environment	0	5%	0.2%	N/A	N	-
FECAL COLIFORM AND E. COLI (# pos/mo) Human and animal fecal waste.	0	0	0	N/A	N	-
TURBIDITY (NTU/Lowest Monthly %≤0.3 NTU) Soil runoff.	N/A	TT (Limit: 95%≤0.3NTU)	100% (Lowest Monthly %)	100% - 100%	N	-
TURBIDITY (NTU/Highest Single Measurement) Soil runoff	N/A	TT (Limit: 1 NTU max)	0.16	N/A	N	-
<b>INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS</b>						
BARIUM (ppm) Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits	2	2	0.0201	0.0198 - 0.0201	N	-
COPPER (ppm) ** Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives.	1.3	AL = 1.3	0.091 (90 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	0 sites exceeding AL	N	6/1/2018- 9/30/2018
LEAD (ppb) ** Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.	0	AL = 15	9.1 (90 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	0 sites exceeding AL	N	6/1/2018- 9/30/2018
NITRATE (AS NITROGEN) (ppm) Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.	10	10	0.42	0.35 - 0.42	N	-
TOTAL NITRATE & NITRITE (AS NITROGEN) (ppm) Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.	10	10	0.42	0.35 - 0.42	N	-
<b>DISINFECTANT/DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS</b>						
TTHMs [TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES] (ppb) * By-product of drinking water disinfection.	N/A	80	28.6	14.9 - 39.5	N	-
HAA5 [HALOACETIC ACIDS] (ppb) * By-product of drinking water disinfection.	N/A	60	12.0	6.8 - 17.6	N	-
CHLORINE (as Cl <sub>2</sub> ) (ppm) Water additive used to control microbes.	4.0	4.0	1	1 - 1	N	-
TOC [TOTAL ORGANIC CARBON] The percentage of Total Organic Carbon (TOC) removal was measured each month and the system met all TOC removal requirements set by the IEPA.						
<b>UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS</b>						
SULFATE (ppm) Erosion of naturally occurring deposits.	N/A	N/A	27.8	27.5 - 27.8	-	-
SODIUM (ppm) Erosion of naturally occurring deposits; Used in water softener regeneration.	N/A	N/A	9.55	8.73 - 9.55	-	-
<b>STATE REGULATED CONTAMINANTS</b>						
FLUORIDE (ppm) Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories. Fluoride results are based on monthly readings reported to IDPH.	4	4	0.75	0.65 - 0.75	N	-
<b>RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS</b>						
COMBINED RADIUM (226/228) (pCi/L) ** Decay of natural and man-made deposits.	0	5	0.95	0.83 - 0.95	N	2/04/2020
GROSS ALPHA excluding radon and uranium (pCi/L) ** Erosion of natural deposits.	0	15	3.1	2.8 - 3.1	N	2/04/2020

## Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 4 (UCMR 4)

Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted. In 2020, Chicago participated in the fourth round of the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 4), during which time it completed monitoring for a range of contaminants, including pesticides, semi-volatile chemicals, metals, indicators and three brominated haloacetic acid groups. The table below lists the unregulated contaminants that were detected in our finished drinking water.

Contaminants (Units)	Sample Year	Average Level Found	Range of Detections
Haloacetic Acids (HAA9) (ppb)	2020	15.4	14.3 – 16.4
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	2020	8.82	8.09– 9.59
Haloacetic Acids (HAA6Br) (ppb)	2020	7.29	6.88 – 7.94

## ILLINOIS EPA'S SAMPLING OF PER- and POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

In 2020, Chicago's Public Water System was sampled as part of the State of Illinois PFAS Statewide Investigation. Eighteen PFAS compounds were sampled, and none were detected in our finished drinking water.

Note: TTHM, HAA5, and Chlorine are for the Chicago Distribution System.

\*Data expressed as LRAA – Locational Running Annual Average (See Definition of terms for Details)

\*\*The state requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though accurate, is more than one year old. If any of these contaminants were detected the last time they were sampled for, they are included in the table along with the date that the detection occurred. Compliance monitoring for lead and copper is conducted every 3 years. Radiochemical contaminant monitoring is conducted every 6 years.

# EDUCATIONAL STATEMENTS REGARDING COMMONLY FOUND DRINKING WATER CONTAMINANTS

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 the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

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 infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

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 dissolve naturally occurring minerals and radioactive materials, and pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity.

Possible contaminants consist of:

- 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 may be naturally occurring or result from urban storm water 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 storm water runoff and residential uses;
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and may also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff and septic systems; and
- Radioactive contaminants, which may 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, USEPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

## WATER QUALITY DATA TABLE FOOTNOTES

**TURBIDITY:** Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water caused by suspended particles. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality and the effectiveness of our filtration system and disinfectants.

**UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS:** A maximum contaminant level (MCL) for this contaminant has not been established by either state or federal regulations, nor has mandatory health effects language been set. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist USEPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water, and whether future regulation is warranted.

**FLUORIDE:** Fluoride is added to the water supply to help promote strong teeth. The IL Department of Public Health has recommended an optimal fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L, with a range of 0.6 mg/L to 0.8 mg/L.

**SODIUM:** There is not a state or federal MCL for sodium. Monitoring is required to provide information to consumers and health officials

who are concerned about sodium intake due to dietary precautions. If you are on a sodium-restricted diet, you should consult a physician about the level of sodium in the water.

**LEAD:** 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 lead service lines and home plumbing. DWM 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 over six hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for a minimum of 5 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 by calling 311 or going to [www.chicagowaterquality.org](http://www.chicagowaterquality.org). 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>.

## Unit of Measurement

**ppm:** Parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)

**ppb:** Parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

**NTU:** Nephelometric Turbidity Unit, used to measure cloudiness in drinking water

**% ≤ 0.3 NTU:** Percent samples less than or equal to 0.3 NTU

**pCi/L:** Picocuries per liter, used to measure radioactivity

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**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.

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** The highest level of 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 Disinfectant Level Goal (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 Disinfectant Level (MRDL):** The highest level of a drinking water disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Highest Level Detected:** This column represents the highest single sample reading of a contaminant of all the samples collected in this calendar year.

**Range of Detections:** This column represents a range of individual sample results, from lowest to highest that were collected during the CCR calendar year.

**Date of Sample:** If a date appears in this column, the Illinois EPA requires monitoring for this contaminant less than once per year because the concentrations do not frequently change. If no date appears in the column, monitoring for this contaminant was conducted during the Consumer Confidence Report calendar year.

**Action Level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant that triggers treatment or other required actions by the water supply.

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

**ND:** Not detectable at testing limits. **N/A:** Not applicable.

**Locational Running Annual Average (LRAA):** The average of 4 consecutive quarterly results at each monitored sample location. The LRAA should not exceed 80µg/L for TTHM and 60 µg/L for HAA5.

## 2020 VOLUNTARY MONITORING

The City of Chicago has continued monitoring for Cryptosporidium, Giardia and E. coli in its source water as part of its water quality program. No Cryptosporidium or Giardia was detected in source water samples collected in 2020. Treatment processes have been optimized to provide effective barriers for removal of Cryptosporidium oocysts and Giardia cysts in the source water, effectively removing these organisms in the treatment process. By maintaining low turbidity through the removal of particles from the water, the possibility of Cryptosporidium and Giardia organisms getting into the drinking water system is greatly reduced.

In 2020, DWM has also continued monitoring for hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium-6. USEPA has not yet established a standard for chromium-6, a contaminant of concern which has both natural and industrial sources. Chromium-6 sampling data are posted at:

[http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/water/supp\\_info/water\\_quality\\_resultsandreports.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/water/supp_info/water_quality_resultsandreports.html)

## CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL SURVEY

The City of Chicago Department of Water Management is required by the Illinois EPA to survey all water services connected to our public drinking water supply. This survey will help us identify and correct “cross-connections”, which are unprotected or improper connections to the public drinking water system that may cause contamination or pollution to enter the system.

Please fill out the survey online at [www.chicagoccr.org](http://www.chicagoccr.org). Please be assured this survey is not an indication of any problems; it is a routine Illinois EPA requirement for all water systems. Responses will be kept confidential for Department of Water Management use only.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

### 2020 VIOLATION SUMMARY TABLE

The City of Chicago Department of Water Management had no monitoring, treatment technique, maximum residual disinfectant level, or maximum contaminant level violations recorded during 2020. However, DWM had one distribution violation. Even though this did not impact the quality of your drinking water, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did to correct the situation.

The Consumer Confidence Rule (CCR) requires water systems to prepare and provide to you, our drinking water consumers, a Consumer Confidence Report each year by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Due to delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Consumer Confidence Report was mailed late, on July 6<sup>th</sup>. As a result, EPA issued a distribution violation.

Violation Type	Violation Begin	Violation Ends
CCR Report	07/01/2020	07/06/2020



Message from Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

WATER QUALITY COMES FIRST!

New Chicago Department of Water Management Water Purification Laboratories

Dear Resident:

As this report outlines, Chicago's tap water meets or exceeds all standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for safe, clean drinking water. Issued annually, this report details information on results above detection limits for annual certified testing of Chicago's drinking water.

The City of Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) continues to deliver almost one billion gallons daily of clean drinking water to residents of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. DWM works tirelessly to keep our water clean and safe by:

- Performing over 600,000 analyses per year of tap water at every step in the treatment process and adjusting treatment protocols as necessary
Using corrosion control in our water to minimize the risk of contaminants leaching from plumbing
Replacing miles of water and sewer mains to increase reliability and efficiency
Offering free water pitchers and six cartridges that are NSF-certified to remove lead and providing complete instructions for flushing water through plumbing to residents and businesses where there is water infrastructure work being done in the vicinity
Offering free residential water testing by a certified laboratory.

We are also taking important actions to address the legacy problem of Chicago's many lead service lines. For the first time, the City now has two programs designed to assist residents who would like to replace their lead service lines. The Equity Program provides a free replacement to residents who meet income and water quality requirements, and the Homeowner-Initiated Program waives up to \$3,100 in permit fees for those who wish to replace their lines. More information is available at: www.LeadSafeChicago.org.

It remains my priority to protect our exceptional water source, Lake Michigan, from polluters and invasive species and to create a strong, efficient water system that provides safe, clean drinking water for every Chicago resident.

Handwritten signature of Lori E. Lightfoot

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

Este informe contiene información muy importante. Tradúscalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.





# FREE LEAD WATER TESTING

Call 311 and ask for a free test kit.  
Completely free for anyone living in Chicago.

1



Sign up by calling 311 OR at [www.chicagowaterquality.org](http://www.chicagowaterquality.org).



Or scan here to sign up

2



The Chicago Department of Water Management will mail you sample bottles and directions.

3



Collect water samples. The Chicago Department of Water Management will pick them back up.

4



You will get a letter with your lead test results.

***You cannot taste or see lead in water – the only way to know is to test.***

The Department of Water Management  
Jardine Water Purification Plant  
1000 East Ohio Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

City of Chicago  
Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor



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