

# What You Should Know About Your drinking water

Your drinking water, treated and delivered by Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA), consistently met or surpassed all the water quality standards and inspections from both the EPA and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control in 2008.

## ¿habla español?

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

### Where Your Water Comes From

The drinking water supplied by the Levy-Limehouse-Bellinger Hill Water Company and managed by the Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) is groundwater drawn from the Upper Floridan Aquifer through two wells.

### Ensuring High Quality Water

Your drinking water is disinfected with chlorine and carefully monitored to ensure its safety and high quality. BJWSA routinely takes water samples from both wells and throughout the distribution system, performs laboratory tests, and reports test results to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). DHEC also performs tests and checks water samples on a routine basis.

### Protecting Water Supplies

In order to protect public drinking water supplies—our rivers, lakes and streams—the State of South Carolina established a Source Water Assessment Program. As part of this program, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) compiled the assessments from all water utilities, including an assessment of the public supply wells for LLBH. This assessment has helped to identify what and where pollution prevention efforts are necessary to ensure the future safety of our community's drinking water. The report serves as an important foundation for our ongoing efforts to protect drinking water sources. A copy of the Source Water Assessment Report is available for your review at the BJWSA Administration Office or at [www.scdhec.net/water](http://www.scdhec.net/water).

### Why Are There Contaminants in Drinking Water?

Drinking water sources include streams, lakes, rivers, reservoirs and wells, which are subject to potential "contamination" by a wide variety of substances that occur naturally or are man-made. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves natural minerals, and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from human activity or the presence of animals.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, 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.

Contaminants that may be present in source water before it is treated:

- **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria that 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 storm 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 septic systems
- **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 or defense activities

### What About Lead In Drinking Water?

Testing shows that the amount of lead in our drinking water is well below the EPA's allowed levels (see chart). However, lead in elevated levels can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. It is important to know that lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with water service lines and home plumbing. BJWSA is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in residential plumbing.

When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds up 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 [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

### Important Information From the EPA

All sources of drinking water are subject to potential contamination by substances that are naturally occurring or man-made. These substances can be microbes, inorganic or organic chemicals and radioactive substances. 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 (1-800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised individuals, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. Guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

### Water Test Results

BJWSA is responsible for making certain that the water you drink does not contain contaminants at levels higher than the amounts mandated as safe by federal and state regulations. The following chart shows the findings of our water testing of samples from well sites and points in the distribution system and how the levels compare to national standards.

Better than EPA Standard	Substance	Typical Source	EPA Ideal Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Highest Detected Level (what we found)
✓	Copper	Corrosion of household plumbing; erosion of natural deposits	1.3 ppm	AL=1.3 ppm	0.129 ppm (90th percentile) 0 over AL
✓	Lead	Corrosion of household plumbing; erosion of natural deposits	AL=15 ppb	0	0 ppm (90th percentile) 1 over AL Actual Range ND-0.41.3 ppb [last required sampling 2006]
✓	Fluoride	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive promoting strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm EPA 2.0 ppm SCDHEC	0.41 Actual Range 0.39-0.41 ppm
✓	Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMS)	By-product of drinking water disinfection	0 ppb	80.0 ppb (annual average)	20.0 ppb (annual average) Actual Range ND-20 ppb
Better than EPA Standard	Substance	Typical Source	EPA Ideal Goal (MRDLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MRDL)	Highest Detected Level (what we found)
✓	Chlorine	Water additive used to control microbes	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0.71 ppm (highest quarterly running avg.) Actual Range 0.34-1.04 ppm

### Terms to Know in Reading the Water Test Results

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

**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.

**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.

**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.

**MRDLG** (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal) 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 contamination.

**ND** (non-detected) No measurable level of a substance or contaminant detected.

**ppm** (parts per million) The equivalent of eight ounces (1 cup) in 62,500 gallons of water.

**ppb** (parts per billion) The equivalent of eight ounces (1 cup) in 62.5 million gallons of water.

want to know more?



If you have any questions about the quality of your water, call the BJWSA Customer Service Department at 843-987-9292. In Beaufort, call 843-987-9200; Hardeeville, 843-288-0006; and Bluffton, 843-707-0017.

Additional sources of information:

- Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org)
- South Carolina Department of Environmental Control [www.scdhec.net](http://www.scdhec.net)
- Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water [www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)
- EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline 800-426-4791

Customers will not receive a mailed copy of this report unless requested. To request a copy, call Mandy Abbott at 843-987-9219.

The LLBH system is now owned and operated by BJWSA. BJWSA encourages public comment on decisions affecting drinking water. BJWSA board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at our Administration Offices on Highway 170, beginning at 9:00 a.m. You can preview board agenda(s) and review board meeting minutes at [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org).