

# Did *you* KNOW?

From source to tap, BJWSA performs tests throughout the system each day to ensure safe drinking water. Raw source water is tested routinely to detect contaminants before it enters the treatment plants. At the plant, water quality experts test the water after each stage of the treatment process. In the distribution system, we collect more than 100 water samples each month to monitor the quality of water once it has left the treatment plant.

## Tritium and Our Water Supply

Tritium is a radioactive isotope of hydrogen. It is present in our water source, the Savannah River, as a result of natural processes in the atmosphere, fallout from past atmospheric nuclear weapons tests, and the operation of the Savannah River Site (SRS). The SRS stopped making nuclear materials and is now only stabilizing nuclear waste. Consequently, tritium levels in the river have been declining.

### ***How is tritium measured in water?***

Tritium is measured in water according to picocuries per liter (pCi/L). "Pico" is a metric prefix that means one trillionth; a **picocurie** is one trillionth of a curie. A curie is a measure of the level of radioactivity. A standard self-illuminating exit sign contains about six and a half curies of tritium. The EPA's safe drinking water standard is a maximum contamination level of 20,000 picocuries of tritium per liter of water and a minimum detection level of 1000 pCi/L.

### ***Is there tritium in our drinking water?***

We monitor extensively for tritium during our water treatment process and report our findings every year in our Water Quality Report. *In 2008, testing showed tritium at 552 pCi/L - less than 3% of EPA's maximum contamination level.*

### MORE QUESTIONS?

Our website is packed with helpful information! Visit [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org)