

Town of Needham

Annual Water Quality Report 2024

Public Water System ID# 3199000



As a service to our customers, the Needham Department of Public Works (DPW) is pleased to present its 2024 Annual Water Quality Report. It's designed to inform you of your drinking water quality and the services the Town delivers to you every day. It's a continuous commitment on our part to provide the highest quality of drinking water and service that meets and exceeds all State and Federal drinking water standards and regulations. Needham continues to be proactive in managing challenges, including addressing national concerns over lead and PFAS. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) routinely inspects and evaluates our water system for its technical, financial and managerial capacity to provide safe drinking water to you, our customers. This report is a requirement of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) that requires all water utilities to provide their customers with an annual water quality report and tap water related issues. Please take a few minutes to read this report and learn about Needham's water system.

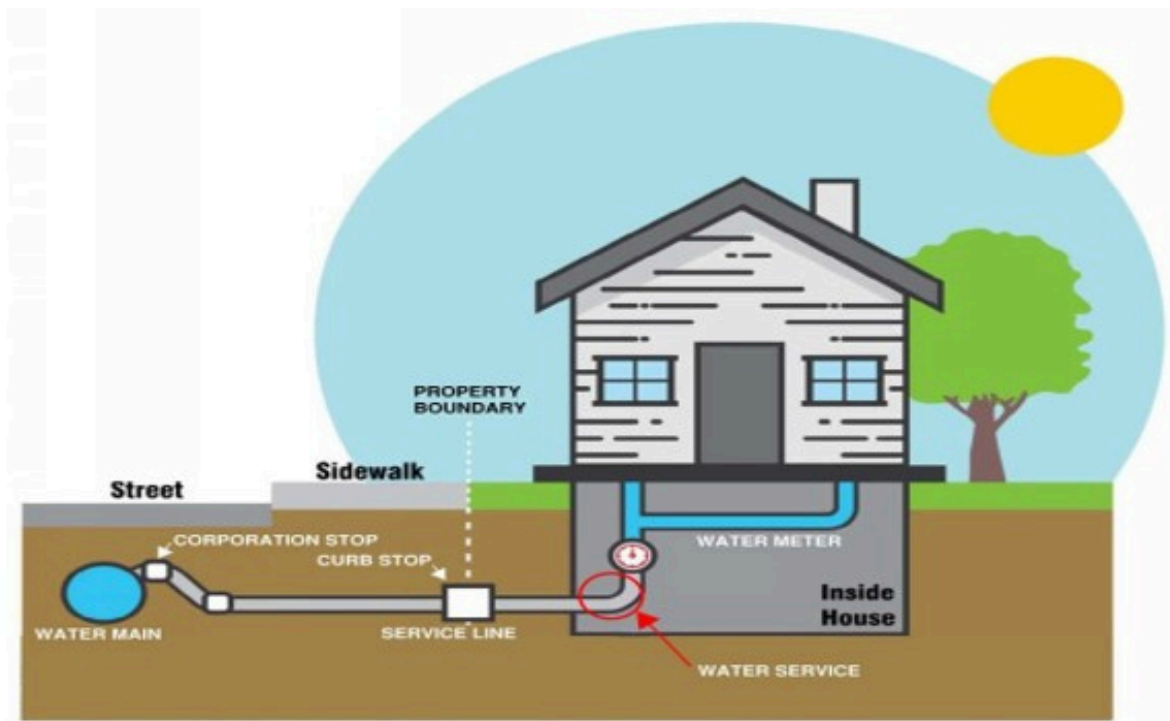


Diagram of a typical water service line that enters your property

Information on Your Source Water



The Charles River Wellfield has been Needham's primary drinking water source since the 1930's. The Water Treatment Facility has been in operation since 2000.

Where does the Town's water come from?

The Town of Needham's primary source of water is the Charles River Wellfield. From this location, water is drawn from three groundwater wells and treated at the adjacent Charles River Water Treatment Facility. The Town's secondary source is the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA). MWRA water is primarily utilized in the summer, when demand is at its highest. The MWRA water supply comes from the Quabbin Reservoir and then conveyed through an underground pipe from the MetroWest Tunnel in Weston to a booster pump station on St. Mary Street. Needham's water distribution system includes 146 miles of water mains and two elevated water storage tanks (Dunster & Birds Hill) that have a combined capacity of 4 million gallons. In 2024 Needham averaged a little more than 3.4 million gallons per day. Of this amount, 70% was produced from its primary source, and 30% from its secondary source.

Source Water Protection

To ensure the highest quality of drinking water for residents, the Town of Needham has adopted by-laws and health regulations designed to preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies and to conserve natural resources. The MassDEP approved the Town's water source protection strategy based on land use and operational restrictions in areas of influence to the Town's drinking water wells. The information collected was incorporated into the Source Water Assessment Protection (SWAP) report. The report is a planning tool to support local and state efforts to improve water supply protection. The assessment helps focus protection efforts on appropriate best management practices and drinking water source protection measures. Residents can help protect sources by taking hazardous chemicals to hazardous material collection days and by limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers. The Town has three drinking water wells located within one water supply protection area. The complete SWAP report is available online at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/source-water-assessment-and-protection-documents>.

Needham's Water Treatment Process



Sodium Hydroxide is used to raise pH at the Charles River Water Treatment Facility

In order to maintain compliance with Federal and State drinking water standards, the Town of Needham's well water must be treated before it reaches consumers' taps. The Charles River Water Treatment Facility removes manganese by oxidation and filtration. The Division treats drinking water with the following processes:

- **Chlorine:** used as a disinfectant to prevent bacteria. Adding chlorine aids in the removal of iron and manganese during greensand filtration. Chlorine levels are continuously monitored and controlled to ensure that disinfection residuals are maintained at the facility and throughout the distribution system.
- **Sodium Hydroxide:** used to raise the natural pH and alkalinity of water to reduce the corrosion of lead and copper from household plumbing systems.
- **Ortho-polyphosphate:** a food-based additive to minimize calcium precipitating in hot water systems.
- **Fluoride:** added to prevent tooth decay/cavities. In the Town's system, the fluoride level is adjusted to an optimal level, averaging 0.7 parts per million (ppm) to improve oral health in children. At this level, it is safe, odorless, colorless, and tasteless.

All components of the water distribution and treatment processes are closely monitored by State certified operators through a computerized Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. According to the water quality results, shown on the following page, Needham's water complies with all State and Federal regulations. The table contains only the contaminants that were detected in Needham's water supply, although the compounds are below the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) set by the EPA. The Town understands how important it is for residents and businesses to be aware of what is in their water.

Water Hardness Guide

This information is provided so that residents can adjust their appliance settings. Needham's water is moderately hard, with approximately 80 range of detection. **.NOTE: 1 Grain per gallon (gpg) = 17.1 ppm**

AMOUNT (PPM)	RATING
<60 PPM	Soft
61-120 PPM	Moderately Hard
121-180 PPM	Hard
>181 PPM	Very Hard

Water Quality Results

Needham's water is monitored for many different kind of substances on a very strict DEP sampling schedule, which must meet specific health standards. Remember that detecting a contaminant does not mean that the water is unsafe to drink. Our goal is to keep all detects below the respective maximum allowed levels. We are pleased to report that your drinking water meets all State and Federal regulations.

Tested After Treatment							
Contaminant	Sample Date	MCL Highest Level Allowed	Amount Detected	Range of Detects	Violation	Sources in Drinking Water	
Chlorine (ppm)	2024	4 MRDL	0.73 avg	0.60-0.86	No	Water additive used to control microbes	
Fluoride (ppm)	2024	4 MRDL	0.70 avg	0.58-0.82	No	Water additive which promotes strong teeth	
Manganese (ppm)	2024	0.05 SMCL	0.005 avg	ND-0.013	No	Naturally found mineral in the earth	
Iron (ppm)	2024	0.3 SMCL	0.01 avg	ND-0.01	No	Naturally found mineral in the earth	
Regulated Contaminants							
(TTHM) Total Trihalomethanes	Quarterly	80 ppb	29 (LRAA)	9.8-62	No	Byproducts of water disinfection	
(HAA5) Haloacetic Acids	Quarterly	60 ppb	11.5 (LRAA)	6.3-19	No	Byproducts of water disinfection	
Nitrate	2/5/2024	10 ppm	0.73	0.73	No	Runoff from fertilizer use, leaching from septic tanks	
Perchlorate	8/8/2024	2 ppm	0.088	0.088	No	Rocket propellants, fireworks, flares, blasting agents	
Barium	8/8/2024	2 ppm	0.029	0.029	No	Discharge of drilling wastes and from metal refineries, erosion of natural deposits	
Contaminant	Sample Date	90th Percentile	AL	MCLG	# of Sites Sampled	Sites above the action level	Typical Source
Lead (ppb)	July thru Sept 2023	5 ppb	15	0	30	0 (Residential)	Corrosion of household plumbing
Copper (ppm)	July thru Sept 2023	14 ppb	1.3	0	30	0 (Residential)	
(PFAS) Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances							
Regulated Contaminant		Detects	Quarterly Average	MCL	Possible Sources		
PFAS 6 (ppt)		6.76-9.22	8.4	20	Discharges and emissions from industrial and manufacturing sources associated with the production or use of these PFAS, including production of moisture and oil-resistant coatings on fabrics and other materials. Additional sources include the use and disposal of products containing these PFAS, such as fire-fighting foams.		

On October 2 2020, Mass DEP published its PFAS public drinking water regulation standard, called a Massachusetts Maximum Contaminant Level (MMCL) of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/l) or parts per trillion (ppt) – individually or for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS. This drinking water standard is set to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water.

Water Quality Results

Volatile Organic Contaminants (Unregulated)						
Contaminant	Sample Date	MCLG	Avg Amount Detected Quarterly	Range of Detects	Violation	Typical Source
Chloroform *(ORSG)	2024 Quarterly	0.07 ug/l	1.6	1.2-2.1 ppb	No	Byproducts of water disinfection
Bromodichloromethane	2024 Quarterly	0	3.0	2.3-3.6 ppb	No	Byproducts of water disinfection
Chlorodibromomethane	2024 Quarterly	0	2.4	1.5-2.8 ppb	No	Byproducts of water disinfection
Secondary Contaminants (Unregulated)						
Secondary Contaminants	Date Sampled	SMCL	MCLG	Detected Level	Violation	Typical Source
Chloride (ppm)	6/8/2024	250 mg/l	N/A	85.5 mg/l	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Hardness (ppm)	6/8/2024	No MCL	N/A	64 mg/l	No	Presence of multivalent cations such as Calcium & Magnesium
Sodium (ppm)	8/8/2024	No MCL	N/A	66 mg/l	No	Natural sources and runoff from use of salt on roadways
Calcium (ppm)	6/8/2024	No MCL	N/A	19.5 mg/l	No	Presence of multivalent cations that causes hard water.
Magnesium (ppm)	6/8/2024	No MCL	N/A	4.69 mg/l	No	Presence of multivalent cations that causes hard water.
Total Dissolved Solids (ppm)	6/8/2024	500 mg/l	N/A	250 mg/l	No	Natural sources, sewage, urban and agricultural runoff. Salts used for road deicing
Sulfates (ppm)	6/8/2024	250 mg/l	N/A	9.42 mg/l	No	Naturally found in soil and rocks. Industrial discharges & agricultural runoff.
Unregulated Contaminants (UCMR)						
Unregulated Contaminants	Year Sampled	Amount Average Detected	Range of Detections (ppt)	UCMR: (Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule)		
Perfluorooctane Sulfonic (PFOS)	2024	5	5 ppt	Unregulated contaminants are those for which the U.S. EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of monitoring unregulated contaminants is to assist the EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulations are warranted.		
Perfluorooctanic Acid (PFOA)	2024	4.3	4-4.6 ppt			
Perfluorobutanesulfonic Acid (PFBS)	2024	2.2	2.2 ppt			
(HAA6Br) Haloacetic Acids	2020	7	1-13 ppb			
(HAA9) Haloacetic Acids	2020	14.5	10-19 ppb			

Terms & Definitions

- **ppm** - parts per million ppb/ug/l = parts per billion ppt = parts per trillion
- **ND** - non-detected NA = non-applicable ng/l = nanograms per liter mg/l = milligrams per liter
- **90th Percentile** - Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below the AL.
- **Action Level (AL)** - The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
- **Chlorine Residual** - Is the lowest level amount of chlorine remaining in the water after a certain period or contact time after its initial application. It constitutes an important safeguard against the risk of subsequent microbial contamination after treatment, a unique and significant benefit for public health.
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** - The federal agency responsible for the development of SDWA (Safe Drinking Water Act) regulations.
- **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)** - The state regulatory agency responsible for the implementation of the SDWA.
- **LRAA (Locational Running Annual Average)** - The average of analytical results for samples taken at a monitoring location during the previous four calendar quarters. Amount detected values for TTHM and HAA5 are reported as LRAA's.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** - The highest allowable level of a contaminant in drinking water. MCL's are set as close to the MCLG's as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is not a known, or expected, risk to health.
- **Office of Research Standard Guideline (ORSG)** – This is the concentration of a chemical in drinking water at or below which adverse health effects are unlikely to occur after chronic (lifetime) exposure. If exceeded, it serves as an indicator of the potential need for further action.
- **Public Water System (PWS)** - Provides water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances to at least 15 service connections or serves an average of at least 25 people for at least 60 days a year. PWS may be a publicly or privately owned.
- **Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)** - The Federal Law that governs the regulation of public water supplies.
- **SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level)** - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water for the secondary contaminant. SMCL's are established to regulate the aesthetics of drinking water, such as appearance, taste, and odor.
- **Treatment Technique (TT)** – Required treatment process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
- **UCMR (Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule)** - Unregulated contaminants are those for which the US EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of monitoring unregulated contaminants is to assist the EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulations are warranted.

Drinking Water & Public Health

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the MassDEP and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health have established regulations that limit contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health. Drinking



Overlooking MWRA's Quabbin Reservoir

water, including bottled water, may contain small amounts of contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate the water poses a health risk. The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, reservoirs and wells. As water travels over the surface of land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and other compounds.

Compounds that may be present in source water include:

- **Microbiological Contaminants:** such as viruses and bacteria that may come from sewage septic systems, agricultural livestock, and wildlife.
- **Pesticides and Herbicides:** that may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses.
- **Inorganic Contaminants:** such as salts and metals that can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- **Organic Contaminants:** synthetic and volatile organic chemicals that are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive Contaminants:** can be naturally occurring or result from oil and gas production or mining activities.

Some people may be more vulnerable than others to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised 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 from their health care providers.

Your drinking water is routinely tested for the substances in accordance with Federal and State drinking water regulations. These substances have not been detected or are significantly below the (MCL) maximum contaminant level allowed.

Important Information from the EPA About Lead

Under EPA regulations, the Town of Needham must test tap water in homes that are likely to have high lead levels. These are usually homes with lead service lines. The EPA requires that 90% of the sampled homes must have lead levels below the action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The Town completed the required MA DEP service line inventory for both public and private indicating the type of material and year it was installed. Letters were sent to all homeowners that have either have a lead service line, galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) or if the material is classified as unknown. Around 99 percent of services lines were found to be non-lead. The updated service line inventory can be found at www.needhamma.gov/publicwatersupply

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 old lead service lines and home plumbing. The Needham Water Department is responsible for providing high-quality water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When 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 and cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Additional information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 or online at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead

Other Measures for Lead Reduction

Lead can enter your drinking water through pipes in your home, or your water service line (that connects your home to the water main) Take these steps to reduce lead in your drinking water:



- Let the water run before using it, fresh water is better than stale. To save water, fill a pitcher with fresh water and place in the refrigerator for future use.
- Any time water has not been used for more than 6 hours, run any faucet used for drinking or cooking until after the water becomes cold.
- Never use hot water from the faucet for drinking or cooking, especially when making baby formula or other food for infants.
- Check your plumbing fixtures to see if they are lead-free. Be careful of places you may find lead in or near your home. Paint, soil, dust, and some pottery may contain lead.
- Remove loose lead solder and debris. Every few months remove the aerator from each faucet in your home and flush the pipes for 3 to 5 minutes.

Improvements to Needham's Water System

Each part of the water system needs routine maintenance in order to maintain a safe and dependable water supply. Listed below are some of the projects undertaken by the Needham Water Division in 2024:

- Upgraded 741 older water meters
- Replaced 230 (lead or cast iron pipe) water service connections.
- Repaired 14 water main breaks and 8 water service line leaks.
- Replaced 120 feet of 12 inch water main on Greendale Ave from (Parker Street to Cimino Road)
- Bennington Road upgraded water main.
- Replaced 2182 feet of 16 inch water main on South Street from (Chestnut Street to Marant Drive) Portions of the water main were upgraded on Stonecrest Drive, Southwood Lane and Farley Pond Lane.
- Upgraded 2 inch water main to 6 inch on Elizabeth Circle.
- Renewed water main on Tower Ave from (Lindbergh Street to Mitchell School)
- Well 3A at the Charles River Water Treatment Facility was cleaned and re-developed to restore its original pumping capacity.
- Conducted sanitary & security inspection on both water storage tanks. (Dunster Road and Birds Hill)



Water Conservation Tips



You can play role in conserving water and saving your-self money in the process by becoming more conscious of the amount of water your household is using by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water.

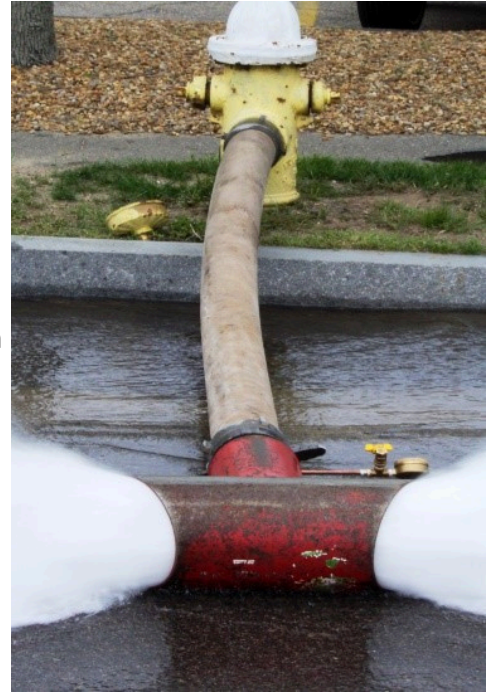
- Water your lawn only as needed. Too-frequent watering can actually weaken a lawn by encouraging shallow roots. The general rule of thumb is one inch per week, including rain.
- Timing is critical for lawn watering. Water your lawn only between the hours of 5 am and 9 am. Mid-day watering will result in evaporation. Install mulch to help keep roots cool and moist.
- Place a rain barrel under your gutter downspouts to collect rainwater for gardening or landscaping projects. Rain barrels can be purchased at the Needham Department of Public Works. To order, please call the DPW Administration Office at 781-455-7550.
- Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Simply turn off all taps and water-using appliances. Then check the meter after 15 minutes. If it moved, you have a leak.
- Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Watch for a few minutes to see if the color shows up in the bowl. It is not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons a day from an invisible toilet leak.

Water Main Flushing

Distribution mains (pipes) convey water to homes, businesses, and hydrants in your neighborhood. Upon entering distribution mains, the water is very high quality, however, water quality can deteriorate in areas over time. Water main flushing is the process of cleaning the interior of water distribution mains by sending a rapid flow of water through the mains.

Flushing maintains water quality in several ways. For example, flushing removes sediments like iron and manganese. Although they do not pose health concerns, they can affect the taste, clarity, and odor of the water. Flushing helps remove stagnant water and ensures the presence of fresh water with sufficient disinfectant (chlorine residual) levels.

During flushing operations in your neighborhood, some short-term deterioration of water quality, though uncommon, is possible. You should avoid tap water household uses at such times. If you do use the tap, allow your cold water to run for a few minutes at full velocity before use.



Flushing operations in Needham typically occur at night in the spring. During this season and time of day, the demand for water tends to be at its lowest. For additional information about flushing, please visit: www.needhamma.gov/hydrantflushing

Cross Connection Control Program

What is a cross connection?

A cross connection is an actual connection between the potable water supply and a source of contamination (sewage, chemicals, gas, etc.). This has the potential of becoming a hazardous situation if the contaminant source were to enter (backflow) into the potable water. Backflow occurs when the water flow is reversed due to a change in pressure, and water flows backwards into and through the system. Contamination can also occur when the pressure in the drinking water system drops due to occurrences such as water main breaks and heavy water demand, causing contaminants to be drawn (back-siphonage) into the potable water system.

Where do I find cross connections?

Garden hoses connected to an outside water tap are the most common sources of cross connections in the home. The garden hose creates a hazard when submerged in non-potable water such as a swimming pool, or when attached to a chemical sprayer for weed control. Vacuum breakers can mitigate possible cross connections.

Your public water supplier is required to survey all industrial, commercial, and municipal facilities to ensure that all cross connections are eliminated or protected by an appropriate backflow device. The water supplier is also responsible for inspecting and testing each backflow prevention device to ensure it is providing maximum protection.

Additional Resources

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

www.mass.gov/dep

617-292-5500

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

www.mass.gov/dph

617-624-6000

Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA)

www.mwra.com

617-242-5323

Department of Conservation and Recreation

www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply.htm

617-626-1250

U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov

800-232-4636

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov

800-311-3435

List of State-Certified Water Quality Testing Labs

www.mwra.com/04water/html/testinglabs.html

617-242-5233

Questions?

For more information about this report or for any questions related to your drinking water, please contact:

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