

2020 South Tongass Water Utility

PWSID# AK2121510

Is my water safe?

We are pleased to present this year's Annual Water Quality Report (Consumer Confidence Report) as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). This report is designed to provide details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality. We are committed to providing you with information because informed customers are our best allies.

Do I need to take special precautions?

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/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Water Drinking Hotline (800-426-4791).

Where does my water come from?

The South Tongass Water Utility gets its water from a water intake source located at Whitman Lake IN001 to the water treatment plant, where it is filtered, treated and disinfected and distributed to the consumer.

Description of Water Treatment Process

Your water is treated by filtration and disinfection. Filtration removes particles suspended in the surface water source. Particles typically include clays and silts, natural organic matter, iron and manganese, and microorganisms. Your water is also treated by disinfection. Disinfection involves the addition of chlorine or other disinfectants to kill bacteria and other microorganisms (viruses, cysts, etc.) that may be in the water. Disinfection is considered to be one of the major public health advances of the 20th century.

Source water assessment and its availability

A source water assessment for the South Tongass Water Utility surface water source was completed in 2014 and the results of the assessment are:

- The Wellhead/Surface Intake Susceptibility is **N/A**.
- The Aquifer Susceptibility is **N/A**.

The overall vulnerability to potential contaminants is:

- Bacteria and Viruses is Low;
- Nitrates/Nitrites is Low;
- Volatile Organic Chemicals is Low;
- Inorganics/Heavy Metals is Low;
- Synthetic Organic Chemicals is Low;
- Other Organic Chemicals is Low;

The Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) group is no longer completing Source Water Assessment reports for public water system (PWS) sources. However, DWSP continues to delineate drinking water source protection areas for all PWS sources and furthers awareness of these protection areas through outreach efforts. DWSP encourages active protection efforts by promoting the development and implementation of DWSP plans by PWS and communities, as well as by providing passive protection efforts through reviewing and commenting on proposed permitted activities near PWS sources and ensuring agency loans and grants prioritize water quality improvement projects near PWS sources.

For assistance, please contact the DWSP coordinator at (907)269-7549, or toll free in Alaska at 1-(866)956-7656. More information may be found at the DWSP website: <https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/dw/dwp>.

Why are there contaminants in my drinking water?

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 Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline (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 dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity: 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 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; and radioactive contaminants, which can 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, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

How can I get involved?

Persons who would like further information regarding the South Tongass water system can use the contact information provided in this report to contact us.

Water Conservation Tips

Did you know that the average U.S. household uses approximately 400 gallons of water per day or 100 gallons per person per day? Luckily, there are many low-cost and no-cost ways to conserve water. Small changes can make a big difference - try one today and soon it will become second nature.

- Take short showers - a 5 minute shower uses 4 to 5 gallons of water compared to up to 50 gallons for a bath.
- Shut off water while brushing your teeth, washing your hair and shaving and save up to 500 gallons a month.
- Use a water-efficient showerhead. They're inexpensive, easy to install, and can save you up to 750 gallons a month.
- Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Water plants only when necessary.
- Fix leaky toilets and faucets. Faucet washers are inexpensive and take only a few minutes to replace. To check your toilet for a leak, place a few drops of food coloring in the tank and wait. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it or replacing it with a new, more efficient model can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it and during the cooler parts of the day to reduce evaporation.
- Teach your kids about water conservation to ensure a future generation that uses water wisely. Make it a family effort to reduce next month's water bill!
- Visit www.epa.gov/watersense for more information.

Water consumption increases during winter months, as water is kept running to minimize chances for freezing water lines and freeze-thaw cycles cause buried water service to burst.

- Burial depth and exterior insulation standards should be followed: the local frost depth can freeze and burst pipes outside the perimeter of the house, which may be identified by unusually wet or icy spots in the yard.
- Insulate pipes in unheated spaces.
- Monitor your domestic water pressure: if it is less than normal, you may have a broken water line.

Waivers

The South Tongass Water Utility maintains a monitoring waiver for Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOC) on file with the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: a waiver renewal will be submitted prior to September 30, 2021 to cover 2020-2022.

Monitoring and reporting of compliance data violations

Chlorine Residual:

We are required to report daily entry point Chlorine residual levels and failed to do so on January 29 of 2020. We did report the following month of February and returned to compliance by submitting a monthly report with entry point chlorine readings reported every day of the month. A return to compliance action was entered by ADEC on 4/20/2020.

Additional Information for 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 service lines and home plumbing. South Tongass Water Utility 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>.

Water Quality Data Table

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the calendar year of this report. Although many more contaminants were tested, only those substances listed below were found in your water. All sources of drinking water contain some naturally occurring contaminants. At low levels, these substances are generally not harmful in our drinking water. Removing all contaminants would be extremely expensive, and in most cases, would not provide increased protection of public health. A few naturally occurring minerals may actually improve the taste of drinking water and have nutritional value at low levels. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done in the calendar year of the report. The EPA or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not vary significantly from year to year, or the system is not considered vulnerable to this type of contamination. As such, some of our data, though representative, may be more than one year old. In this table you will find terms and abbreviations that might not be familiar to you. To help you better understand these terms, we have provided the definitions below the table.

Contaminants	MCLG or MRDLG	MCL, TT, or MRDL	Detect In Your Water	Range		Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
				Low	High			
Disinfectants & Disinfection By-Products								
(There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants)								
Chlorine (as Cl ₂) (ppm)	4	4	1.35	.4	1.35	2020	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	NA	60	57.075	25.6	94	2020	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	NA	80	27.5	11.7	46.8	2020	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Inorganic Contaminants								
Barium (ppm)	2	2	.0037	NA	NA	2020	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Radioactive Contaminants								
Alpha emitters (pCi/L)	0	15	2	NA	NA	2017	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Radium (combined 226/228) (pCi/L)	0	5	.15	NA	NA	2017	No	Erosion of natural deposits

Contaminants	MCLG	AL	Your Water	Sample Date	# Samples Exceeding AL	Exceeds AL	Typical Source
Inorganic Contaminants							
Copper - action level at consumer taps (ppm)	1.3	1.3	.2	2020	0	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead - action level at consumer taps (ppb)	0	15	1.3	2020	0	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

Unit Descriptions	
Term	Definition
ppm	ppm: parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)
ppb	ppb: parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)
pCi/L	pCi/L: picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)
NA	NA: not applicable
ND	ND: Not detected
NR	NR: Monitoring not required, but recommended.

Important Drinking Water Definitions	
Term	Definition
MCLG	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	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.
TT	TT: Treatment Technique: A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
AL	AL: Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
Variances and Exemptions	Variances and Exemptions: State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.
MRDLG	MRDLG: Maximum residual disinfection 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 contaminants.
MRDL	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.
MNR	MNR: Monitored Not Regulated
MPL	MPL: State Assigned Maximum Permissible Level

TT Violation	Explanation	Length	Health Effects Language	Explanation and Comment
Surface water treatment rule filtration and disinfection violations	We received three Chlorine Residual Treatment Technique violations for May, August, and September of 2020.	We returned to compliance (RTC) on 4/19/21.	Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches.	We had days in May, August, and September when we shut down the water treatment plant due to high raw water turbidity. During those times, the chlorine SERD fell below 0.900 mg/L. The chlorine residual in the treated water storage tanks and the distribution system never fell below the required levels.

For more information please contact:

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