

# Water Quality Report

Based on results of testing  
performed in 2023.

*Austin Utilities is issuing the results of monitoring done on its drinking water for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023. The purpose of this report is to advance consumers' understanding of drinking water and heighten awareness of the need to protect precious water resources.*

## Source of Water

Austin Utilities provides drinking water to its residents from a groundwater source: eight wells ranging from 110 to 1075 feet deep that draw water from the Prairie Du Chien-Jordan, Spillville, and St. Peter aquifers.

The water provided to customers meets current drinking water standards, but the MN Department of Health has also made a determination as to how vulnerable the source of water may be to future contamination incidents. If you wish to obtain the entire source water assessment regarding your drinking water, please call 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818-9318 during normal business hours or view it online at:

[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/swa](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/swa)

Call 507-433-8886 if you have questions about Austin's drinking water or would like information about opportunities for public participation in decisions that may affect the quality of the water.



## Water Treatment

Austin's water quality is especially high due to the depth of the wells and the quality of the source; therefore there is little need for treatment. At each of our wells, the following water treatment products are added to the groundwater before it enters into the distribution system:

- **Fluoridation**

The State of Minnesota requires all municipal water systems to add fluoride to the drinking water to promote strong teeth and prevent tooth decay. The approved range from the Minnesota Department of Health for Austin's water system has been established at a range of 0.5 to 0.9 ppm, with Austin maintaining a 0.68 ppm average in year 2023. Last year alone, the staff at Austin Utilities performed a total of more than 1,900 fluoride tests at different residential and business sites around the city.

- **Disinfection**

Chlorine is added to the water at each well to minimize the chance for any bacteria, viruses or fungi affecting the safety of the drinking water. Total Chlorine is measured weekly at seven specific locations and once

a month at 25 other specific locations throughout the water distribution system. In 2023, staff at Austin Utilities conducted more than 700 chlorine tests with a result of 1.5 ppm average.

- **Corrosion Control**

A blended polyphosphate solution is used for corrosion control by coating the water distribution system and household piping to prevent the leaching of lead and copper into the drinking water. The blended polyphosphate solution is also used to minimize the appearance of rusty water. Polyphosphates do not remove iron from water but simply stabilize and disperse the iron so that the water remains clear and does not produce iron stains. Polyphosphates are water purification chemicals that are employed to correct problems caused by inorganic groundwater contaminants (iron, manganese, calcium, etc.) and also to preserve water quality in distribution systems. Testing for polyphosphate concentration is conducted monthly at 7 selected locations with results of 1.5 ppm average for the year 2023.



# Compliance with National Primary Drinking Water Regulations

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.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- **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 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 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.
- **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, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations which 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.

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. 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. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.



# How to Read the Water Quality Data Tables

The tables show the contaminants we found last year or the most recent time we sampled for that contaminant. They also show the levels of those contaminants and the Environmental Protection Agency's limits. Substances that we tested for but did not find are not included in the tables.

We sample for some contaminants less than once a year because their levels in water are not expected to change from year to year. If we found any of these contaminants the last time we sampled for them, we included them in the tables below with the detection date.

We may have done additional monitoring for contaminants that are not included in the Safe Drinking Water Act. To request a copy of these results, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-4700 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Regulated Substances Controlled in the Distribution System (Tested at customer taps.)						
Contaminant	EPA's Action Level	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG)	90% of Results Were Less Than	# of Homes with High Levels	Violation	Typical Source
Copper (07/21/22)	90% of homes less than 1.3 ppm	0 ppm	0.98 ppm	0 out of 30	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing.
Lead (07/21/22)	90% of homes less than 15 ppb	0 ppb	1.5 ppb	0 out of 30	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing.

AU samples and tests for Lead and Copper every 3 years to comply with the EPA's Lead & Copper Rule. The next round of sampling and testing is July 2025.

- Key**
- 90% Level . . . . . 90% of samples must be below the AL.
  - AL . . . . . Action Level is the concentration of a contaminant which triggers treatment or another requirement which a water system must follow.
  - gpg . . . . . Grains per gallon.
  - MCL . . . . . (Maximum Contaminant Level) Highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
  - MCLG . . . . . (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal) 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.
  - MRDL . . . . . Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level
  - MRDLG . . . . . Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal
  - N/A . . . . . Not Applicable.
  - ND . . . . . Not Detected.
  - NT . . . . . Not Tested.
  - Ntu . . . . . Nephelometric units.
  - PCi/L . . . . . Pico curies per liter (a measure of radioactivity).
  - ppb . . . . . Parts per billion.
  - ppm . . . . . Parts per million.
  - Range . . . . . Lowest to the highest a contaminant was detected in 2023.
  - SMCL . . . . . Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level.

Contaminant	EPA's Limit (MCL or MRDL)	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG or MRDLG)	Highest Average or Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results	Violation	Typical Source of Contaminant
<b>Inorganic &amp; Organic Contaminants (Tested in drinking water.)</b>						
Nitrate	10.4 ppm	10 ppm	1.6 ppm	0.0-1.6 ppm	NO	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.
Barium	2 ppm	2 ppm	0.14 ppm	N/A	NO	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits.
Selenium	50 ppb	50 ppb	8.36 ppb	N/A	NO	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from mines.
Gross Alpha	15.4 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	11.0 pCi/l	0.0-11.0 pCi/l	NO	Erosion of natural deposits.
Combined Radium	5.4 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	3.9 pCi/l	1.3-3.9 pCi/l	NO	Erosion of natural deposits.
<b>Contaminants Related to Disinfection (Tested in drinking water.)</b>						
Total Trihalomethanes (THMs)	80 ppb	N/A	2.7 ppb	1.7-2.7 ppb	NO	By-product of drinking water disinfection.
Total Chlorine	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	1.34 ppm	1.12-1.47 ppm	NO	Water additive used to control microbes.
<b>Other Substances (Tested in drinking water.)</b>						
Fluoride	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0.60 ppm	0.55-0.61 ppm	NO	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive to promote strong teeth

Unregulated Contaminants (Tested in drinking water.)			
Contaminant	Comparison Value	Highest Average Result or Highest Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results
Sodium*	20 ppm	6.46 ppm	N/A
Sulfate	500 ppm	36.9 ppm	N/A
Lithium	10 ppb	13.7 ppb	9.2 - 20.5 ppb

\*Note that home water softening can increase the level of sodium in your water.

## Lead in Drinking Water

You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies, or your job. Coming in contact with lead can cause serious health problems for everyone. There is no safe level of lead. Babies, children under six years, and pregnant women are at the highest risk.

Lead is rarely in a drinking water source, but it can get in your drinking water primarily from material and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Austin Utilities is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of material used in plumbing components.

**Read below to learn how you can protect yourself from lead in drinking water.**

1. **Let the water run** for 30-60 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking if the water has not been turned on in more than six hours.
2. **Use cold water** for drinking, making food, and making baby formula. Hot water releases more lead from pipes than cold water.
3. **Test your water.** In most cases, letting the water run and using cold water for drinking and cooking should keep lead levels low in your drinking water. If you are still concerned about lead, arrange with a laboratory to test your tap water. Testing your water is important if young children or pregnant women drink your tap water.
  - Contact a Minnesota Department of Health accredited laboratory to get a sample container and instructions on how to submit a sample:  
[www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/waterquality/labmap.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/waterquality/labmap.pdf)
4. **Treat your water** if a test shows your water has high levels of lead after you let the water run.

- Read about water treatment units:

**Point-of-Use Water Treatment Units for Lead Reduction** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html>)

More 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).

## Austin Utilities Water System

### Water Hardness

The average water hardness for Austin is at 16 grains per gallon (gpg).

### Total Water Storage

- 500,000 Gallon Elevated Storage Reservoir (Ellis Tower)
- 1,000,000 Gallon Elevated Storage Reservoir (Belair Tower)
- 2,500,000 Gallon Ground Storage Reservoir (Downtown Plant)
- 2,000,000 Gallon Ground Storage Reservoir (Energy Park)

### Total Number of Wells in Service - 8

- Well No. 2 (Todd Park)
- Well No. 3 (Service Drive)
- Well No. 4 (Sargeant Springs at Country Club)
- Well No. 6 (Ellis)
- Well No. 8 (8th Ave SW)
- Well No. 9 (Belair)
- Well No. 11 (Elmhurst)
- Well No. 12 (Energy Park)

## Water Conservation

Conservation is essential, even in the land of 10,000 lakes. We must use our water wisely. Below are some tips to help you and your family conserve – and save money in the process.

- Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks.
- When shopping, choose appliances and equipment with the ENERGY STAR® or WaterSense® logo. They are more energy and water efficient.
- Check out Austin Utilities' CONSERVE & SAVE® program for rebates on qualifying energy efficient equipment purchases. For a list of available rebates and to download applications with complete terms and conditions, visit [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com).

**CONSERVE & \$SAVE®**



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