



MLGW

# Memphis Water Quality Report 2022

No water, no life. A simple, factual statement from marine biologist Sylvia Earle. Our survival depends on clean, drinkable water. It is a precious resource.

## Groundwater

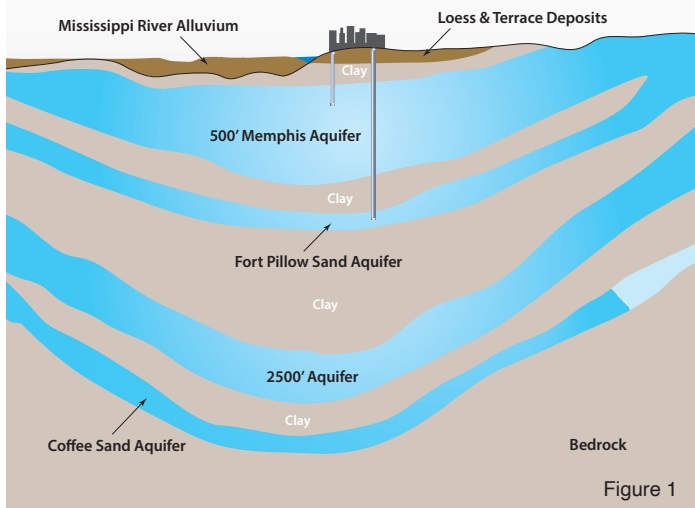
Memphis is the largest city in the country that relies 100% on groundwater, according to the University of Memphis' Center for Applied Earth Science and Engineering Research (CAESAR).

Groundwater fills the Memphis Aquifer and the other aquifers that supply Memphis. Memphis Light, Gas and Water pulls water from the aquifers, sends it through an aerator, and treats it so it meets drinking water standards.

Memphians are blessed with water so pure it requires little treatment. We must all do our part to protect it. The Groundwater Foundation lists ways to keep our groundwater free from contamination:

-Plant native plants. They are naturally adapted to grow here so they require less watering and fewer chemical treatments to thrive.

-Dispose of waste correctly. Do not pour hazardous

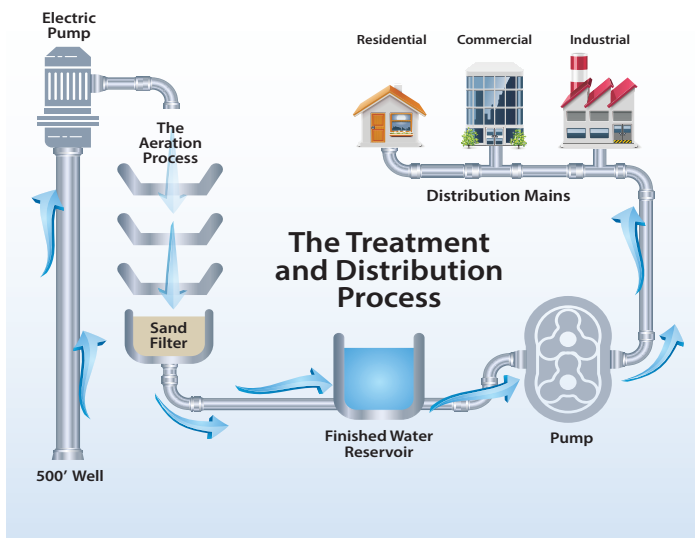


products like paint, cleaners, or motor oil down drains or into the street. That goes for prescription drugs too.

-Do not flush prescriptions down the toilet or pour prescription medicine down a drain. The chemicals can pollute our groundwater.

Find ways to conserve water at [mlgw.com/watertips](http://mlgw.com/watertips).

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 pose a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791. Sources: EPA and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation



By looking at Figure 1 on page 1, you'll see that the layers act as a natural filter removing many impurities from the water. Some experts believe the water we drink today began as raindrops over 2,000 years ago.

MLGW brings water from the aquifer to your home by way of an extensive system that includes 10 water pumping stations and more than 175 wells throughout Shelby County.

### What we do

After the water is collected and processed, MLGW's Water Quality Assurance Laboratory ensures our water's quality and safety through extensive testing of about 40,000 tests per year.

Though our naturally pure water needs little treatment, we put forth this additional care to add to the final quality, safety and taste that our customers are accustomed to enjoying.

### Other drinking water sources

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. As water travels over 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 human activity.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation set regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations determine limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

### Cryptosporidium



Cryptosporidium is a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis. Both the parasite and the disease are commonly known as "Crypto."

While this parasite can be spread in several different ways, water (drinking water and recreational water) is the most common way to spread the parasite. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cryptosporidium is a leading cause of waterborne disease among people in the U.S.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised individuals such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some

### Contaminants That May Be Present In Source Water:

- 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 storm water 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 storm water runoff, and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.



elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

### Source water and wellhead protection

An explanation of Tennessee's Source Water Assessment Program, the Source Water Assessment summaries, susceptibility scorings, and the overall TDEC report to the EPA can be viewed online at: [tn.gov/environment/program-areas/wr-water-resources/water-quality/source-water-assessment](https://tn.gov/environment/program-areas/wr-water-resources/water-quality/source-water-assessment).

MLGW's wellhead protection plan and source water assessment are available for public review by calling **Quinton Clark, Manager, Water Engineering and Operations**, at 901-320-3939, 7 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

For more information on groundwater protection, visit [epa.gov/nscep](https://epa.gov/nscep) and request a copy of the EPA's Citizen's Guide to Ground Water Protection. You also can view it online by searching for the title, EPA's Citizen's Guide to Ground-Water Protection or by clicking here: [EPA's Citizen's Guide](#).

### Opportunities to discuss water quality issues

MLGW holds meetings of its Board of Commissioners, which are livestreamed and open to the public, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 8:30 a.m. The meetings are held in **MLGW's Administration Building, 220 South Main Street, Memphis, TN**.

Public meetings are also held periodically by the Shelby County Groundwater Control Board. For more information on the time and location of future meetings, call the Water Quality Section of the **Shelby County Health Department** at 901-544-7775.

### Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule

The EPA requires MLGW to participate in the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR). This testing identifies chemical contaminants in drinking water that may require future regulation.



# 2022 Water Quality Table

## RESULTS OF INORGANIC ANALYSES

| Component               | Average Amount Detected | Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) | Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) | Range of Levels Detected      | Major Sources in Drinking Water   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| FLUORIDE                | 0.61 parts per million  | 4.0 parts per million           | 4.0 parts per million                 | 0.46 - 0.83 parts per million | Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories |
| NITRATE as Nitrogen (N) | 0.38 parts per million  | 10.0 parts per million          | 10.0 parts per million                | 0.12 - 0.96 parts per million | Erosion of natural deposits; leaching from septic tanks; sewage; runoff from fertilizer use                               |
| SODIUM *                | 9.8 parts per million   | Not applicable                  | Not applicable                        | 7.5 - 13.7 parts per million  | Naturally present in the environment  |

Results surpass state and federal drinking water regulations.

### Fluoride Reduction

Fluoridation has been successfully practiced in the U.S. since the mid-1900s. MLGW began adding fluoride to the water supply according to mandates set by a City of Memphis Ordinance at a concentration of 1.0 ppm. In December 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposed through the CDC that the fluoride level recommended for drinking water be set at 0.7 mg/L. The Rules of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation made this same recommendation.

MLGW changed the fluoride content in finished water from 1.0 mg/L to 0.7 mg/L in 2013. Because of its contribution to the dramatic decline in tooth decay over the past 75 years, the CDC named community water fluoridation as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Ways you can help protect our water supply:

- Never put anything down a storm drain, wisely dispose of household and lawn/garden chemicals. Never pour hazardous wastes on the ground, in a storm drain or in an indoor drain. Consider using non-toxic alternatives to toxic household and lawn chemicals.
- Recycle used motor oil. Many auto stores and gas stations will accept used motor oil. Two gallons of used motor oil can be reprocessed into fuel and provide enough electricity to run the average household for about 24 hours.
- Wash your car at a car wash and prevent the soaps, polishes, waxes and other chemicals from entering the storm drain system.
- Think before you flush! Flushing unused or expired medicines can be harmful to our drinking water. Properly disposing of unused or expired medication helps protect you and the environment. The Memphis Police Department has installed several Prescription Drug Take-Back Locations throughout the city at specific Memphis Police precincts, Shelby County Sheriff precincts and specific Walgreens and CVS locations. The bins are in the lobby area of a precinct near you that are fully staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. The prescription drug take-back program is for citizen use only.

Search online for Tennessee's Permanent Household Prescription Drug Take-Back locations or [tdeconline.tn.gov/rxtakeback](https://tdeconline.tn.gov/rxtakeback).

- Recycle batteries, paints, solvents and chemicals by contacting local recycling companies or by taking them to the “Household Hazardous Waste Collection” site located at 6305 Haley Rd., Memphis, TN 38134. This location is open weekly on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For additional information, contact the Water Quality Section of the Shelby County Health Department at 901-222-7729.

## RESULTS OF LEAD AND COPPER SAMPLING AT RESIDENTIAL WATER TAPS

| Component     | Amount Detected  | Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)  | Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) | Sites Exceeding Action Level (AL) | Major Sources in Drinking Water  |
|---------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>LEAD</b>   | 6.25 parts per billion (90% of homes tested had lead levels less than 6.25ppb)   | Action Level (AL)= 90% of the homes tested must have lead levels less than 15 parts per billion    | Zero parts per billion                | 1 site of 55 exceeded AL          | Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits                                   |
| <b>COPPER</b> | 0.37 parts per million (90% of homes tested had copper levels less than 0.37ppm) | Action Level (AL)= 90% of the homes tested must have copper levels less than 1.3 parts per million | 1.3 parts per million                 | 0 sites of 55 exceeded AL         | Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives |

### Lead and Copper

Plumbing materials could contribute to lead and copper levels at the tap. There is no detectable lead in Memphis' source water. Regarding copper, very low levels of this metal occur naturally. Standing water in pipes for six hours or more along with lead or lead component plumbing may yield low levels of lead at the tap. It's rare that the lead levels exceed the action level. Depending on the specific circumstances, copper levels at the tap may be high.

The results reported here on lead and copper are from tests performed in 2021 at a targeted group of homes served by MLGW in areas of Memphis and Shelby County.

Fifty-five homes, most of which had some lead plumbing constituents, were tested. Out of that number, only one site exceeded the lead action level, and none exceeded the copper action level. The samples were collected after six to eight hours of no water usage. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile result for lead was 6.25 ppb and the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile result for copper was 0.37 ppm.

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. MLGW 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 two 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 (1-800-426-4791)** or at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](https://epa.gov/safewater/lead).

**MLGW offers a free lead testing kit that allows MLGW water customers in Memphis and Shelby County to have their tap water tested. To request a free lead kit, you can email us at [waterlab@mlgw.org](mailto:waterlab@mlgw.org) or call 901-320-3962. When contacting us, please provide your name, address and a contact number.**



For more information about your drinking water, contact MLGW's Water Quality Lab at 901-320-3962, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday. To view this report online, visit: [mlgw.com/about/waterqualityreport](https://mlgw.com/about/waterqualityreport) or you can request a hard copy by calling 901-320-3962. You can email your comments to us at: [waterlab@mlgw.org](mailto:waterlab@mlgw.org).

### En español

Información para personas de habla hispana: Este reporte contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Hágalo traducir o pida que se lo lea alguien que lo entienda bien. O mejor aún, lea la versión en español en nuestro sitio de red, [mlgw.com/about/waterqualityreport](https://mlgw.com/about/waterqualityreport).



## RESULTS OF MICROBIOLOGICAL TESTING

| Component                        | Maximum Monthly Detected  | Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)                        | Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) | Annual Amount Detected   | Major Sources in Drinking Water      |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Total Coliform Bacteria**</b> | Highest positive monthly sample detected was 0.42% in Jan. 2022 | Presence of coliform bacteria in 5% of monthly samples | Zero bacteria detected                | Number of positive samples for the year: 1 out of 2,880 or 0.03% | Naturally present in the environment |

Results surpass state and federal drinking water regulations.

| Component       | Highest Quarterly Running Annual Average | Level Found | Range of Amount Detected | Maximum Contaminant        |
|-----------------|--|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Chlorine</b> | 0.96                                     | 1.02        | 0.2 - 1.89               | MRDL-4.0 parts per million |

Results surpass state and federal drinking water regulations.

### The Coliform Group

Water Quality Assurance Laboratory staff analyzed 2,880 bacteriological tests in 2022 using samples of water treated and distributed throughout Memphis and Shelby County. We primarily test for the indicator organisms that are part of the coliform group prevalent in the environment. Whenever these organisms are found in the environment, it may be a possible indication that other types of harmful organisms are present as well. However, it is possible to obtain a misleading result as these organisms may be coming from the faucet itself, not necessarily from the water, from some other source while sampling or from accidental contamination of the sample during its analysis. Any sample indicating a positive result for coliform is methodically rechecked. All rechecks during the 2022 year proved to be negative.

## RESULTS OF DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS

| Component                      | Average Amount Detected   | Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) | Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) | Range of Amount Detected      | Major Sources in Drinking Water            |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES</b>   | ***11.9 parts per billion | 80 parts per billion            | Not applicable                        | 1.04 - 67.9 parts per billion | By-products of drinking water disinfection |
| <b>HALOACETIC ACIDS (HAA5)</b> | ***1.5 parts per billion  | 60 parts per billion            | Not applicable                        | 1.05 - 1.8 parts per billion  | By-products of drinking water disinfection |
| <b>CHLORINE</b>                | 1.16 parts per million    | MRDL - 4.0 parts per million    | MRDLG - 4.0 parts per million         | 0.65 - 1.49 parts per million | Water additive used to control microbes    |

Results surpass state and federal drinking water regulations.

### Chlorine Residual

Federal and state drinking water regulations require detectable disinfectant (chlorine) residuals throughout our water distribution system. MLGW's water contains approximately one part per million of chlorine in order to ensure the proper residuals. This is done to prevent the possibility of waterborne disease. Both the maximum residual disinfectant level and maximum residual disinfectant level goal are set at four parts per million.



### Disinfection By-Products

Disinfection is an absolutely essential component of drinking water treatment. Disinfection prevents the occurrence and spread of many serious and potentially deadly water-borne diseases. When chlorine is used for disinfection, it can react with naturally-occurring organic matter in the water. Minute amounts of disinfection by-products can be formed because of these reactions.

As a result, regulations limit the amount of disinfection by-products in your water. Two categories of disinfection by-products are specifically limited by these regulations: Total Trihalomethanes and Haloacetic Acids. These by-products must be reported to the state of Tennessee annually. Averages are calculated quarterly on samples taken at various locations through our distribution system. As the table above shows, our water meets the disinfection by-products standards.

## ADDITIONAL WATER QUALITY PARAMETERS OF INTEREST

This table shows levels of additional water quality parameters which are often of interest to our customers. Values shown are averages from our water treatment plants for 2022. There are no health-based limits for these substances in drinking water.

| Parameter (unit of measure) | Average Level Detected | Average Range of Levels Detected | Typical Source of Contaminants       |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Alkalinity (ppm)            | 54                     | 18 - 142                         | Erosion of natural deposits          |
| Calcium (ppm)               | 10.0                   | 3.5 - 23.2                       | Erosion of natural deposits          |
| Chloride (ppm)              | 3.8                    | 2.1 - 7.2                        | Erosion of natural deposits          |
| Hardness (ppm)              | 48                     | 16 - 132                         | Erosion of natural deposits          |
| Hardness (grains/gallon)    | 2.8                    | 0.9 - 7.7                        | Erosion of natural deposits          |
| Iron (ppm)                  | 0.01                   | 0.01 - 0.07                      | Naturally occurring                  |
| pH (Standard)               | 7.2                    | 6.3 - 7.8                        | -----                                |
| Phosphate (ppm)             | 0.99                   | 0.02 - 2.55                      | Water additive for corrosion control |
| Sulfate (ppm)               | 4.7                    | 1.9 - 11.1                       | Naturally present in the environment |
| Temperature (°F)            | 65                     | 60 - 77                          | -----                                |

## RESULTS OF RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANT TESTING

| Component   | Average Amount Detected | Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) | Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) | Range of Levels Detected | Major Sources in Drinking Water        |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| COMBINED RADIUM (226/228) (pCi/L)                 | 0.6                     | 5.0                             | 0                                     | 0.4 - 0.9                | Decay of natural and man-made deposits |
| GROSS ALPHA (excluding radon and uranium) (pCi/L) | 0.7                     | 15                              | 0                                     | 0.5 - 0.8                | Erosion of natural deposits            |

**Results surpass state and federal drinking water regulations.**

As water travels over land or through the ground, it can dissolve naturally occurring radioactive minerals or radioactive contaminants from human activities such as oil and gas production, mining activities or nuclear facilities. Certain minerals or contaminants may emit a form of radiation known as gross alpha, radium 226 and radium 228 (combined radium). The values shown in the table are the most recent analysis conducted in 2021 at the water treatment plants.

## RESULTS OF TURBIDITY TESTING

| Component | Level Detected | Range of Amount Detected |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Turbidity | 1.81           | 0.09 - 1.81              |

We met the treatment technique for turbidity with 98% of monthly samples below the turbidity limit of 1.0 NTU.

Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.

## TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

To protect public health, state and federal agencies set maximum contaminant levels, maximum contaminant level goals or action levels for contaminants. Below are definitions of terms used in this report to help you understand the 2022 results.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Action Level (AL)</b>                                | The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers a treatment or other requirement that a water system must follow.   |
| <b>Below Detection Limit (BDL)</b>                      | The concentration of a compound is less than the smallest amount that can be measured by the test method used.   |
| <b>Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)</b>                  | The highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to MCL goals as feasible using the best available treatment technology.  |
| <b>Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)</b>            | 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.   |
| <b>mg/L or ppm</b>                                      | Milligrams per liter or parts per million (one penny in \$10,000)  |
| <b>µg/L or ppb</b>                                      | Micrograms per Liter or parts per billion (one penny in \$10,000,000)  |
| <b>pCi/L</b>  | Picocuries per Liter   |
| <b>Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)</b> | The level of 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. |
| <b>Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)</b>       | The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for the control of microbial contaminants.                  |
| <b>NTU</b>  | Nephelometric Turbidity Units—Turbidity is a measure of the clarity of the water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTUs is just noticeable to the average person.  |
| <b>Treatment Technique (TT)</b>                         | A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.  |

## WATER QUALITY TABLE FOOTNOTES

\* There is no state or federal MCL for sodium. Monitoring is required to provide information to consumers and health officials who are concerned about sodium intake due to dietary precautions. If you are on a sodium-restricted diet, you should consult a physician about the level of sodium in the water.

\*\* For the highest monthly level detected, there was only one positive sample out of 2,880 samples taken. MLGW immediately responded by resampling above, at and below where the positive sample had been collected, and all the results were negative.

\*\*\* Data expressed as LRAA – Locational Running Annual Average: The average of four consecutive quarterly results at each monitored sample location.