



Quench Your Thirst With This Knowledge

2024 Water Quality Report – Columbia County Water Utility

This report includes information collected from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.



Approximately 140,000 Tests Run!

In order for Columbia County Water Utility to ensure the safety of our customers' drinking water, our water treatment facilities constantly run process control tests throughout each day. Our laboratory also runs tests in the distribution system to help ensure water safety. In 2024 our lab tested the homes and businesses approximately 1,500 times just for Bacteria alone.

This report is written each year to give our customers information on the quality of their drinking water. Topics covered in this report include source water information, numerical values of detected finished water quality parameters, violations, term definitions, testing exemptions and health facts.



Our Drinking Water Sources

Columbia County currently withdraws up to 45,900,000 gallons a day of surface water from the Savannah River to the Jim Blanchard Sr. Water Treatment Facility on Point Comfort Road. An additional 8,000,000 gallons of surface water could be withdrawn from the Clarks Hill Reservoir and treated at the Clarks Hill Water Treatment Facility on Highway 221. Combined, the Water Utility is able to treat up to 53,900,000 gallons a day to help meet the needs of our customers.



Water Sources

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) 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.

Source Water Assessment

Columbia County Water Utility completed a Source Water Assessment study in April 2002. This assessment identifies potential pollutant sources that could contaminate the water supply. In the ranking of High, Medium, and Low for potential pollutants, our water supply was ranked Low at both the Jim Blanchard Water Treatment Plant and the Clarks Hill Water Treatment Plant. This assessment is available to the public. If you would like to review or purchase a copy, please call (706) 863-6928 during normal business hours.

Health Facts

For health reasons, the EPA has prescribed regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that 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 the water poses a health risk. **More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).**

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/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 (1-800-426-4791).

Contaminants that may be present in source water include the following:

- Microbial contaminants (e.g., viruses and bacteria) that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wild-life;
- Inorganic contaminants (e.g., salts and metals) which can be naturally occurring* or result from urban storm run-off, industrial or domestic waste discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;
- Pesticides and herbicides which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater run-off, and residential uses;
- Organic chemical contaminants including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals which are by-products of industrial processes, petroleum production and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater run-off, and septic systems;
- Radioactive contaminants which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

Lead Service Line Information

Lead can cause serious health effects in people of all ages, especially pregnant people, infants (both formula-fed and breastfed), and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and parts used in service lines and in home plumbing. Columbia County Water Utility is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in the plumbing in your home. Because lead levels may vary over time, lead exposure is possible even when your tap sampling results do not detect lead at one point in time. You can help protect yourself and your family by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Using a filter, certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead, is effective in reducing lead exposures. Follow the instructions provided with the filter to ensure the filter is used properly. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water. Before using tap water for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula, flush your pipes for several minutes. You can do this by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. If you have a lead service line or galvanized requiring replacement service line, you may need to flush your pipes for a longer period. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact our laboratory manager Rodney Silvey at 706-868-3460. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

If 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.

The Service Line Inventory (SLI) is a requirement under the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) to help water systems identify and replace lead service lines. It mandates that all public water systems develop and maintain an inventory of service line materials to assess the presence of lead and protect public health. The inventory will support proactive lead reduction efforts and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements to minimize lead exposure in drinking water. To access the SLI for Columbia County Water Utility go to ga-epd.120water-ptd.com or contact Brittany Akins at 706-651651-0433.

Columbia County Water Utility (CCWU) Quality Data for 2024

Regulated Inorganic Substances Detected in Treated Water Entering Distribution System

Substance (Units)	Maximum Level Allowed (MCL)	Maximum Level Goal (MCLG)	Average Detected in CCWU	Range Detected in CCWU	Sample Date	Did CCWU Meet Requirements	Major Sources and Health Effects in Drinking Water
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.71	0.61 - 0.82	2024	Yes	Water additive which promotes strong teeth.
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	0.13	0.25	2024	Yes	Runoff from fertilizer use; septic tank leachate.
Turbidity (ntu)	TT	n/a	Maximum Detected = 0.28	0.07 - 0.28	2024	Yes	Soil runoff and erosion of riverbanks and shoreline.
Turbidity (percent)	TT=percentage of samples < 0.3ntu	n/a	Percent Below 0.3ntu 100%	n/a	2024 2024	Yes	Soil runoff and erosion of riverbanks and shoreline.

Regulated Inorganic Substances Detected in Treated Water at Tap

Lead and Copper Testing Information Previous Sampling dates - 2023 Substance (Units) - # of sites tested	Action Level Allowed (AL)	Maximum Level Goal (MCLG)	90th Percentile in CCWU	Number of sites above AL	Range Detected	Did CCWU Meet Requirements	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservative. Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. For more information on all individual testing results, please contact the Laboratory Manager: Rodney Silvey (706-868-3460).
Copper (ppm) - 50	1.3	1.3	0.16	0	0.0035 - 0.570	Yes	
Lead (ppb) - 50	15	0	3.2	3	0.0 - 17.0	Yes	

Regulated Organic Substances Detected in Treated Water at Tap

Substance (Units)	Max Yearly Average Allowed (MCL)	Maximum Level Goal (MCLG)	Max Yearly Site LRAA Detected in CCWU	Annual Range Detected in CCWU	Sample Date	Did CCWU Meet Requirements	Total Trihalomethanes (THM) Violation Columbia County Water Utility exceeded the MCL for THMs during the third and fourth quarters of 2024. Some possible health effect associated with high THM levels are liver, kidney, or central nervous system problems. Those with a compromised immune system, caring for infants, pregnant, or elderly may be at increased risk. For further information please visit the following web page: https://www.columbiacountyga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4354/THM-620-Letter?bidId= or contact Margaret Doss at 706-863-6928 or watertquality@columbiacountyga.gov Action taken: Currently Columbia County is increasing our flushing program and looking into other treatment options.
Total Trihalomethanes (THM) (ppb)	80	n/a	86.4	12.5 - 103.5	2024	No	
Total Haloacetic Acids (HAAs) (ppb)	60	n/a	36.8	9.66 - 50.3	2024	Yes	
Chlorine (ppm)	4	4	1.0	0 - 2.2	2024	Yes	
Total Organic Carbon (ppm)	TT	n/a	1.6	1.3 - 1.9	2024	Yes	Naturally present in the environment.

Regulated Bacteriological Sampling

Substance (Units)	Number of Required Samples Collected Per Month	Maximum Level Allowed (MCL)	Number of Violations	Highest Monthly Percent	Sample Date	Did CCWU Meet Requirements	Coliform bacteria, including E-coli, are naturally present in the environment. Fecal Coliform and E-coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special risk for infants, young children, some elderly, and people with compromised immune systems.
Total Coliforms (P/A)	120	5.00%	0	2.5	2024	Yes	
E-Coli (P/A)	120	MCLG = 0	0	0.0	2024	Yes	

For Your Information

Definitions

Substance	Normal Range Detected in CCWU	Action Level (AL): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow. Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): 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. Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): 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. Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL): Maximum disinfectant residual allowed in the distribution system. Not Detected (nd): The amount of a material in a sample that was not detected during analytical testing. Treatment Technique (TT): A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water. Parts per Billion (ppb): One part per billion is equivalent to one penny in 10 million dollars. Parts per Million (ppm): One part per million is equivalent to one penny in 10 thousand dollars..... (1 ppm = 1 mg/L) Violation: Failure to comply with any drinking water regulation. LRAA - Locational Running Annual Average	Unregulated Contaminants Monitoring (UCMR5) Columbia County Water Utility is currently in process of testing for PFOS and PFOAs in our drinking water. At the present time Columbia County is within MCL limits on all tested parameters. This study will be completed in July of 2025, and all results will be available soon thereafter. As of December 31, 2024, the following parameters have been detected but are not regulated: perfluoropentanoic acid (PFPeA) 0.0030 ug/L
Sodium	7.6- 9.8 mg/L		
Alkalinity	20 - 50		
Hardness	1 - 40 ppm on average (Soft Water)		
pH	6.5 - 8.5		
Iron	< 0.3 mg/L on average		

Columbia County Water Utility monitors for unregulated parameters in order to assist the EPA in determining where certain contaminants occur and whether additional regulations may be necessary.

Below is a list of the Unregulated Contaminants that were detected in the Columbia County drinking water in 2019.

Parameter	MCL	MCLG	CCWU - Ranges ug/L	CCWU - Average ug/L	Sample Date	Violation	Waivers and Exemptions (January 1, 2023 - December 31,2025) Currently, Columbia County Water Utility has a waiver and is exempt from testing some Synthetic Organic chemicals. It is also exempt from Asbestos and Cyanide. If you would like a full list of chemicals we have a waiver for, please contact the laboratory manager. Please Call For more information about the CCWU (ID # 0730000), please contact the Water Laboratory Manager, Rodney Silvey at (706) 868-3460 or the Treatment Operations Manager, John Maldonado at (706) 860-2587. The Public Works Committee (PWC) meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 8:30 am in the Auditorium at the Evans Government Center. Columbia County Water Utility was involved in a study of our source water for Cryptosporidium. Cryptosporidium is a parasite that can cause intestinal disease. People with weakened immune systems may develop serious, chronic, and sometimes fatal illness. This Study ended in September 2015 and showed no Cryptosporidium in our source waters.
Bromochloroacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	1.10 - 2.6	1.8	2019	N/A	
Bromodichloroacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	1.10 - 2.0	1.5	2019	There is no MCL for these Parameters	
Chlorodibromoacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	0.31 - 0.57	0.18	2019		
Monobromoacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	0.31 - 0.34	0.05	2019		
Dichloroacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	5.7 - 16	10.62	2019		
Monobromoacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	0.0 - 3.0	0.75	2019		
Trichloroacetic acid	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	5.1 - 15	8.85	2019		
Manganese	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	0.65 - 17	4.3	2019		
Total Organic Carbon (Source Water mg/L)	Not Regulated	Not Regulated	1.4 - 2.4	1.9	2019		

This report contains important information about our drinking water. To translate it, or to speak with someone who understands it please call 706-863-6928.

Spanish: Este informe contiene información importante acerca de nuestra agua potable. Para traducirlo, o para hablar con alguien que entiende que por favor llame al 706-863-6928.