

2021

# WATER QUALITY REPORT



PALATINE HILL WATER DISTRICT

6/18/2021



## Palatine Hill Water District 2021 Drinking Water Quality Report

### Palatine's Drinking Water Sources

Palatine Hill Water District purchases water from the City of Portland, who provides treated surface water from the Bull Run Watershed and groundwater from the Columbia South Shore Well Field located east of the Portland International Airport. The water is conveyed through Portland's water distribution system to Palatine Hill's main pump station on Highway 43 at Carey Lane and/or from the Upper Reservoir connection on Palatine Hill Rd.

**The Bull Run Watershed**, Portland's protected surface water supply, is in the Mount Hood National Forest, 26 miles from Portland. The Portland Water Bureau and the U.S. Forest Service carefully manage the watershed to sustain and supply clean drinking water. In a typical year, the watershed receives an astounding 135 inches of precipitation (rain and snow), which flows into the Bull Run River and then into two reservoirs that store nearly 10 billion gallons of drinking water.

Source water assessments are completed to identify contaminants of concern for drinking water. For the Bull Run, the only contaminants of concern are naturally occurring microorganisms, such as *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, fecal coliform bacteria, and total coliform bacteria. The Portland Water Bureau regularly tests Bull Run water for these microorganisms that live in virtually all freshwater ecosystems.

The Portland Water Bureau treats water to control organisms that could make people sick but does not currently treat for *Cryptosporidium*. Portland is installing filtration to remove *Cryptosporidium* and other contaminants from drinking water by 2027.

Portland's source water assessment is available at [portland.gov/water/resources/source-water-assessment](https://portland.gov/water/resources/source-water-assessment) or by calling 503-823-7525.

**The Columbia South Shore Well Field**, Portland's protected groundwater supply, provides drinking water from 25 active wells located in three different aquifers. The well field is between Portland International Airport and Blue Lake Park. Portland uses the well field for two purposes: to supplement the Bull Run supply in the summer, and to temporarily replace the Bull Run supply during turbidity events, maintenance activities, and emergencies.

The Columbia South Shore Well Field is beneath homes and businesses with a variety of potential contaminant sources. The deep aquifers that are the primary sources of water supply have natural geologic protection from pollutants present at the land surface. Portland, Gresham, and Fairview work together to protect the well field. The cities' Groundwater Protection Programs work with residents and businesses in the well field to ensure that pollutants from this urban area do not impact the groundwater source.

To learn more about groundwater protection and find upcoming groundwater education events, visit [portland.gov/water/groundwater](https://portland.gov/water/groundwater).



## Frequently Asked Questions About Water Quality

### What test results will I find in this report?

The Palatine Hill/Portland Water Bureau monitors drinking water for over 200 regulated and unregulated contaminants. This report lists all of the regulated contaminants the bureau detected in drinking water in 2020. **If a known, health-related contaminant is not listed in this report, the Palatine Hill/Portland Water Bureau did not detect it in drinking water.**

### How is Portland's drinking water treated?

Currently, Portland's drinking water treatment is a three-step process. **1) Chlorine** disinfects against organisms that could otherwise make people sick. **2) Ammonia** stabilizes chlorine to form a longer-lasting disinfectant. **3) Sodium hydroxide** reduces corrosion of metals like lead. Portland's treatment is changing in the coming decade.

### Is Portland's water safe from viruses such as COVID-19?

Your water is safe from viruses and safe to drink. Portland controls microorganisms, including viruses, with chlorine.

### Is Portland's water filtered?

No. Neither of Portland's sources is filtered. In response to a series of low-level detections of *Cryptosporidium* in 2017, Portland is installing a filtration plant to treat for *Cryptosporidium*. Bull Run water will be filtered by 2027.

### Does the Portland Water Bureau add fluoride to the water?

No. Fluoride naturally occurs in Portland's water at very low levels. You may want to ask your dentist or doctor about supplemental fluoride for preventing tooth decay. This is especially important for young children.

### Is Portland's water soft or hard?

Bull Run water—Portland's main water supply—is very soft. It typically has a total hardness of 3–8 parts per million (ppm), or ¼ to ½ a grain of hardness per gallon. Portland's groundwater supply is moderately hard: about 80 ppm, or about 5 grains per gallon.

### What is the pH of Portland's water?

The pH of Portland's drinking water typically ranges between 7.5 and 8.5.

### How can I get my water tested?

For free lead-in-water testing, contact the LeadLine at [leadline.org](https://www.leadline.org) or **503-988-4000**. For other testing, you can pay a private laboratory to test your tap water. Not all labs are accredited to test for all contaminants. For information about accredited labs, contact the Oregon Health Authority at [ORELAP.Info@state.or.us](mailto:ORELAP.Info@state.or.us) or **503-693-4100**.



## What causes temporary discolored water?

Sediment and organic material from the Bull Run Watershed settle at the bottom of water mains. These can sometimes be stirred up during hydrant use or a main break. They can also be seen in the fall as a harmless tea-colored tint. Discolored water can also be caused by older pipes in buildings that add rust to the water. Find out more at [portland.gov/water/discoloredwater](http://portland.gov/water/discoloredwater).

## How should property managers maintain water quality in large buildings?

Managers of large buildings should implement a water management program to protect their water quality and address the risk of *Legionella* growth. This is especially important during the pandemic. If you are currently using less water, run water weekly, check your hot water system, and take steps before reopening. Find more at [portland.gov/water/WQBuilding](http://portland.gov/water/WQBuilding).

## Have water quality or pressure issues or concerns? Contact Palatine Hill Water District at:

503-639-5096 or email [info@palatinehillwaterdistrict.com](mailto:info@palatinehillwaterdistrict.com)

## What the EPA Says Can Be Found in Drinking Water

Across the United States, 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.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems and require monitoring for these contaminants. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Contaminants in drinking water sources may include: **microbial contaminants**, such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoa from wildlife; **inorganic contaminants**, such as naturally-occurring salts and metals; **pesticides and herbicides**, which may come from farming, urban stormwater runoff, or home and business use; **organic chemical contaminants**, such as byproducts from industrial processes or the result of chlorine combining with naturally-occurring organic matter; and **radioactive contaminants**, such as naturally-occurring radon.

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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 or at [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater).



## Contaminants Detected in 2020

| Regulated Contaminant   | Detected in Portland's Water           |         | EPA Standard |          | Sources of Contaminant                   |  |
|---|--|---------|--------------|----------|--|--|
|   | Minimum                                | Maximum | MCL or TT    | MCLG     |  |  |
| <b>Untreated Source Water</b>                                   |  |         |              |          |  |  |
| Turbidity (NTU)   | 0.22                                   | 3.31    | 5            | N/A      | Erosion of natural deposits              |  |
| Fecal Coliform Bacteria<br>(% >20 colonies/100 mL in 6 months)  | Not Detected                           | 0%      | 10%          | N/A      | Animal wastes                            |  |
| <i>Giardia</i> (#/L)  | Not Detected                           | 0.06    | TT           | N/A      | Animal wastes                            |  |
| <b>Treated Drinking Water</b>                                   |  |         |              |          |  |  |
| Metals and nutrients at the entry points                        |  |         |              |          |  |  |
| Arsenic (ppb)   | <0.50                                  | 0.92    | 10           | 0        | Found in natural deposits                |  |
| Barium (ppm)  | 0.0009                                 | 0.0097  | 2            | 2        | Found in natural deposits                |  |
| Fluoride (ppm)  | <0.025                                 | 0.17    | 4            | 4        | Found in natural deposits                |  |
| Nitrate – Nitrogen (ppm)  | <0.010                                 | 0.087   | 10           | 10       | Found in natural deposits; animal wastes |  |
| Microbial contaminants in the distribution system               |  |         |              |          |  |  |
| Total Coliform Bacteria<br>(% positive per month)               | 0%                                     | 0%      | N/A          | N/A      | Found throughout the environment         |  |
| Disinfection residual and byproducts in the distribution system |  |         |              |          |  |  |
| Total Chlorine Residual (ppm)                                   | Running annual average                 | 0.12    | 2.51         | 4 [MRDL] | 4 [MRDLG]                                | Chlorine used to disinfect water         |
|   | Range of single results at all sites   | 0.12    | 2.51         | N/A      | N/A                                      |  |
| Haloacetic Acids (ppb)  | Running annual average at any one site | 29.1    | 29.1         | 60       | N/A                                      | Byproduct of drinking water disinfection |
|   | Range of single results at all sites   | 29.1    | 29.1         | N/A      | N/A                                      |  |
| Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)                                     | Running annual average at any one site | 51.3    | 51.3         | 80       | N/A                                      | Byproduct of drinking water disinfection |
|   | Range of single results at all sites   | 51.3    | 51.3         | N/A      | N/A                                      |  |



| Unregulated Contaminant       | Detected in Portland's Water |         |         | Sources of Contaminant    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------|
|                               | Minimum                      | Average | Maximum |                           |
| <b>Treated Drinking Water</b> |                              |         |         |                           |
| Radon (pCi/L)                 | <50                          | 170     | 340     | Found in natural deposits |
| Sodium (ppm)                  | 2.9                          | 5.6     | 12      |                           |
| Manganese (ppm)               | 0.002                        | 0.009   | 0.024   | Found in natural deposits |

The Portland Water Bureau posts additional results at: [portland.gov/water/TestResults](http://portland.gov/water/TestResults)

## Definitions

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### MRDLG: Maximum Residual Disinfectant 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.

### N/A: not applicable

Some contaminants do not have a health-based level or goal defined by the EPA.

### NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

The unit for measuring the turbidity, or cloudiness, of a water sample.

### ppm: parts per million

Water providers use ppm to describe a small amount of a substance within the water. In time measurement, one part per million is about 32 seconds out of one year.

### ppb: parts per billion

Water providers use ppb to describe a very small amount of a substance within the water. In time measurement, one part per billion is about 3 seconds out of 100 years.



## **pCi/L: picocuries per liter**

Picocurie is a measurement of radioactivity.

## **TT: Treatment Technique**

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

## **About These Contaminants**

### **Arsenic, barium, and fluoride**

These metals are elements found in the earth's crust. They can dissolve into water that is in contact with natural deposits. At the levels found in Portland's drinking water, they are unlikely to lead to negative health effects.

### **Fecal coliform bacteria**

As part of Portland's compliance with the filtration avoidance criteria of the Surface Water Treatment Rule, water is tested for fecal coliform bacteria before disinfectant is added. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in source water indicates that water may be contaminated with animal wastes. This is measured in percent of samples with more than 20 colonies in 100 milliliters of water during any six-month period. The Portland Water Bureau uses chlorine to control these bacteria.

### ***Giardia***

Wildlife in the watershed may be hosts to *Giardia*, a microorganism that can cause gastro-intestinal illness. The treatment technique (TT) is to remove 99.9 percent of *Giardia* cysts. The Portland Water Bureau uses chlorine to control *Giardia*.

### **Haloacetic acids and total trihalomethanes**

Disinfection byproducts form when chlorine interacts with naturally occurring organic material in the water. High levels of disinfection byproducts can cause health problems in people. Portland adds ammonia to form a more stable disinfectant, which helps minimize disinfection byproducts.

### **Nitrate - Nitrogen**

Nitrate, measured as nitrogen, can lead to bacterial and algal growth in the water. At levels that exceed the standard, nitrate can contribute to health problems. At the levels found in Portland's drinking water, nitrate is unlikely to lead to negative health effects.

### **Radon**

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled. Radon can be detected at very low levels in the Bull Run water supply and at varying levels in Portland's groundwater supply. Based on the historical levels of radon in groundwater combined with the limited



amount of groundwater used, in Portland, people are unlikely to have negative health effects from radon in water. Find more information about radon from the EPA at [epa.gov/radon](https://www.epa.gov/radon).

## **Sodium**

There is currently no drinking water standard for sodium. At the levels found in drinking water, it is unlikely to lead to negative health effects.

## **Total chlorine residual**

Total chlorine residual is a measure of free chlorine and combined chlorine and ammonia in Portland's distribution system. Chlorine residual is a low level of chlorine remaining in the water and is meant to maintain disinfection through the entire distribution system.

## **Total Coliform bacteria**

Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment. Coliform bacteria usually do not make people sick. They are used as an indicator that other potentially harmful bacteria may be present. If more than 5 percent of samples in a month are positive for total coliforms, an investigation must be conducted to identify and correct any possible causes. The Portland Water Bureau uses chlorine to control these bacteria.

## **Turbidity**

Turbidity is the cloudiness of a water sample. In Portland's system, increased turbidity usually comes from large storms, which suspend organic material in Bull Run water. Increased turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide an environment for microorganisms to grow. Since the Portland Water Bureau does not yet filter Bull Run water, the treatment technique (TT) is that turbidity cannot exceed 5 NTU more than 2 times in 12 months. When turbidity rises in the Bull Run source, Portland switches to its Columbia South Shore Well Field source.

## **Monitoring for *Cryptosporidium***

*Cryptosporidium* is a potentially disease-causing microorganism that lives in virtually all freshwater ecosystems. Drinking water treatment for *Cryptosporidium* is required by state and federal regulations. For five years, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) did not require the Portland Water Bureau to treat for *Cryptosporidium* based on data showing that *Cryptosporidium* was rarely found in the Bull Run Watershed. Since 2017, test results have shown low-level detections of *Cryptosporidium* primarily during the rainy season. As a result, OHA determined that treatment is now necessary. Portland has made several decisions about how to treat for *Cryptosporidium*, including choosing filtration as the treatment method and deciding on the location of the future treatment plant. The Portland Water Bureau is on track to have the filtration plant built and running by 2027.

The Portland Water Bureau does not currently treat for *Cryptosporidium*, but is required to do so under drinking water regulations. Portland is working to install filtration by 2027 under a compliance



schedule with OHA. In the meantime, the Portland Water Bureau is implementing interim measures such as watershed protection and additional monitoring to protect public health. Consultation with public health officials continues to conclude that the general public does not need to take any additional precautions.

Exposure to *Cryptosporidium* can cause cryptosporidiosis, a serious illness. Symptoms can include diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and stomach pain. People with healthy immune systems recover without medical treatment. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with severely weakened immune systems are at risk for more serious disease. Symptoms may be more severe and could lead to serious life-threatening illness. Examples of people with weakened immune systems include those with AIDS, those with inherited diseases that affect the immune system, and cancer and transplant patients who are taking certain immunosuppressive drugs.

The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that a small percentage of the population could experience gastrointestinal illness from *Cryptosporidium* and advises that customers who are immunocompromised and receive their drinking water from the Bull Run Watershed consult with their health care professional about the safety of drinking the tap water.

**2020 Results of *Cryptosporidium* Monitoring at the Raw Water Intake**

| Number of Samples |                                     | Concentration Detected (oocysts/L) |         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| Total tested      | Positive for <i>Cryptosporidium</i> | Minimum                            | Maximum |
| 185               | 39                                  | Not detected                       | 0.08    |

More information: [portland.gov/water/crypto](http://portland.gov/water/crypto)

**Special notice for immunocompromised persons**

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised 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 people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (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**.

**Reducing exposure to lead**

**Sources of lead in Portland**

The Portland Water Bureau cares about the health of the families in our community and is committed to helping you. If present, lead at elevated levels can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant people and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing.



The Portland Water Bureau is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in homes or buildings. Lead is rarely found in Portland’s source waters and there are no known lead service lines in the water system. In Portland, lead enters drinking water from the corrosion (wearing away) of household plumbing materials containing lead. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe — commonly used in homes built or plumbed between 1970 and 1985 — and brass components and faucets installed before 2014.

In Portland, the most common sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint, household dust, soil, and plumbing materials. Lead is also found in other household objects such as toys, cosmetics, pottery, and antique furniture.

## What you can do

When your water has been sitting for several hours, such as overnight or while you are away at work or school, 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 drinking water, you can request a free lead-in-water test from the **LeadLine** (leadline.org or 503-988-4000). Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 800-426-4791 or [epa.gov/safewater/lead](https://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

Additional steps to reduce exposure to lead from plumbing:

- Run your water to flush the lead out.
- Use cold, fresh water for cooking, drinking, and preparing baby formula
- Do not boil water to remove lead.
- Test your child for lead.
- Test your water for lead.
- Consider using a filter.
- Clean your faucet aerators every few months.
- Consider replacing old fixtures.

## Lead and copper testing results from homes with higher risk of lead in water

The Portland Water Bureau offers free lead-in-water tests to anyone in the service area. Twice each year, the Portland Water Bureau also collects water samples from a group of over 100 homes that have lead solder and are more likely to have higher levels of lead in water. Testing results from 2020 were below the EPA action level.

| Regulated Contaminant   | Detected in Residential Water Taps |   | EPA Standard              |                   | Sources of Contaminant |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|                         | Fall 2020 Results <sup>1</sup>     | Homes Exceeding Action Level <sup>2</sup> | Action Level <sup>2</sup> | MCLG <sup>3</sup> |                        |
| Lead (ppb) <sup>3</sup> | 13.8                               | 10 out of 120 (8.3%)                      | 15                        | 0                 |                        |



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|                           |       |                   |     |     |   |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------------|-----|-----|---|
| Copper (ppm) <sup>3</sup> | 0.262 | 0 out of 120 (0%) | 1.3 | 1.3 | Corrosion of household and commercial building plumbing systems |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------------|-----|-----|---|

<sup>1</sup> 90<sup>th</sup> Percentile: 90 percent of the sample results were less than the values shown.

<sup>2</sup> Action Level definition: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or requirements of which a water system must follow.

<sup>3</sup> See page 6 for definitions.

## More information

LeadLine: [leadline.org](https://www.leadline.org) or 503-988-4000

- Free lead-in-water testing
- Free blood lead testing for children
- Free lead reduction services.