

For more information, please contact MWRA at (617) 242-5323, or visit [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com).

## WATER QUALITY UPDATE An Analysis of May 2003 Sampling Data

MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY  
100 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, MA 02129



## MWRA WATER QUALITY UPDATE

### May 2003 Highlights

- **MWRA achieved CT disinfection requirements for the month** at both Ware Disinfection Facility (WDF) and Cosgrove Disinfection Facility (CDF). Chlorine dose at CDF was lowered to 1.7 mg/L from at 1.8 mg/L on the 7th. Dose at Ware Disinfection Facility remained at 1.2 mg/L. Dose at Norumbega remained at 1.5 mg/L. Levels of disinfection by-products (DBPs) were higher than May 2002 for the MetroWest and Metropolitan communities. CT results appear on Page 5. Not a single community sample violated the Total Coliform Rule criteria. See Page 6. DBP results appear on Page 7.
- **Somerville had 30 discolored water and 5 no water complaints on the 22nd** when an MWRA contractor hit a local main on Columbia Street. The main was repaired within a few hours.
- **3-point time slice CT reporting has resumed.** The chlorine analyzer pump at Cosgrove Intake was replaced on the 29th and is back in service. The pump has been out of service since mid October 2002. See Page 5 for details.
- **The Quabbin Reservoir level rose to 90.9% capacity on May 31st.** The reservoir has not been at this capacity since October 2001.
- **The Wachusett Reservoir had a number of very short turbidity spikes** which were attributed to renovations and upgrades being performed at the Cosgrove Disinfection Facility. See Page 4.
- **Look for the 2002 Report on Your Tap Water** in your mailbox this month. The annual report is a summary of your drinking water for 2002. For extra copies contact Joshua Das, Project Manager, Public Health by email: [JoshuaDas@mwra.state.ma.us](mailto:JoshuaDas@mwra.state.ma.us) or phone: (617) 242-5323.

[Let us know what you think \(617\) 242-5323](tel:6172425323)

**Release Date: June 20, 2003**

## Water Quality Update

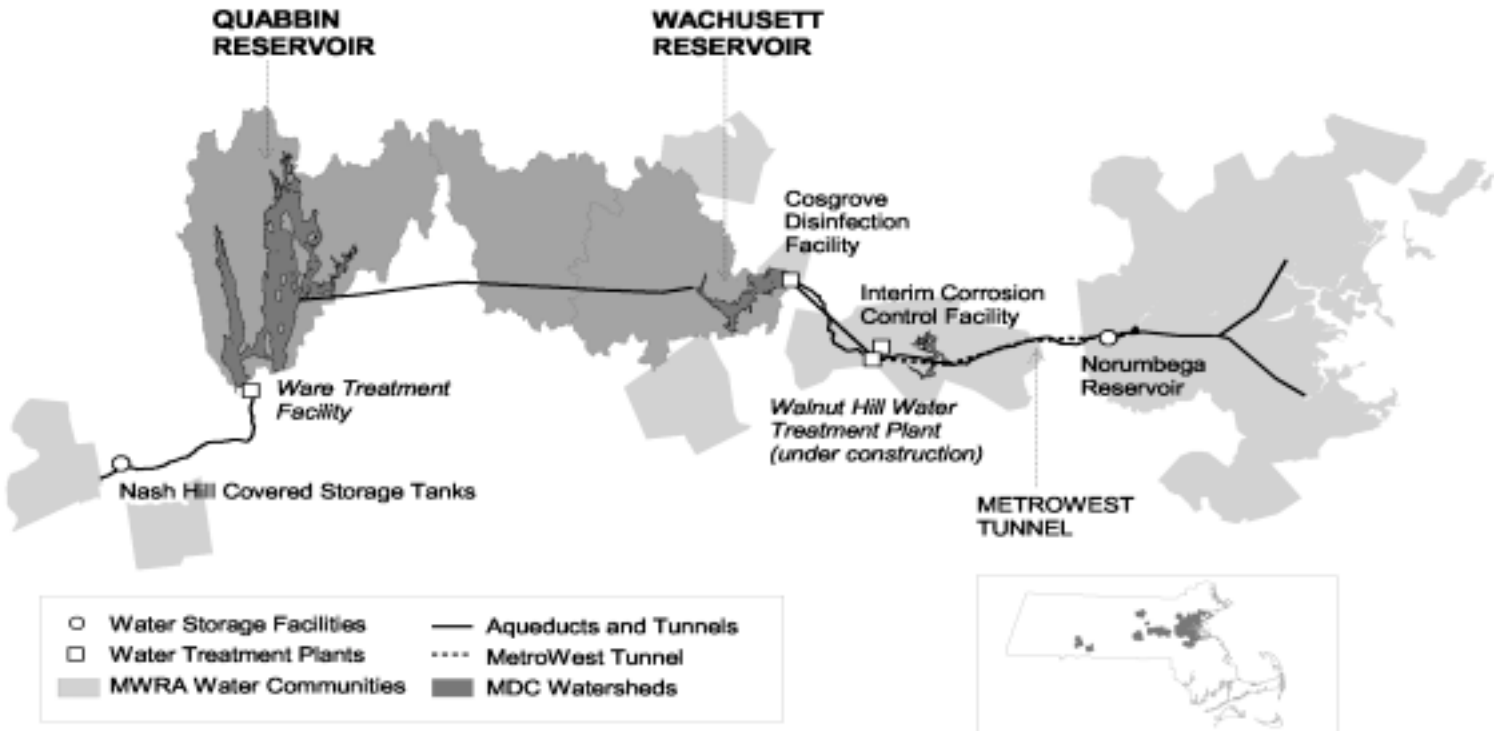
This is a monthly report containing information about the quality of water supplied by MWRA. It provides a more detailed review of water quality than the annual water quality report that is mailed each June to customers in our service area. The report is available at [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com).

## The Water System

MWRA provides about 250 million gallons of water each day to 46 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Each municipality is responsible for distributing the water within its own community. More than two million people are served by the MWRA water supply system.

Quabbin Reservoir is the primary source of water for our system and one of the country's largest water supply impoundments, with a capacity of 412 billion gallons. Quabbin water represents source water for the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct (CVA) system. Water is transferred from Quabbin Reservoir to the 65 billion gallon Wachusett Reservoir in Clinton via the Quabbin Aqueduct. Wachusett water represents source water for MetroWest and Metropolitan Boston communities. The watershed areas of the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs total 401 square miles. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), which manages the watersheds, and MWRA are committed to protection of the water supply through aggressive watershed protection as the first line of defense against water contamination. Three-quarters of the watersheds are protected lands and over 80% are either forest or wetlands.

The map below indicates the location of reservoirs, treatment facilities, and service communities.



## Indicators of Water Quality

Tests are conducted on water sampled at the source reservoirs (source or raw water) and also on water after treatment (treated water). MWRA routinely uses six general indicators of water quality: microbial, corrosiveness, disinfection by-products, turbidity and algae, disinfectant residual, and mineral analysis. Testing frequencies vary by parameter.

The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) sets standards for source and treated water quality. The standards relate to coliform, turbidity, watershed protection, disinfection and disinfection by-products, over 120 potential chemical contaminants, and waterborne disease outbreaks. MWRA monitors for these parameters on schedules ranging from daily to annually.

Customer communities must also meet certain standards under the SDWA concerning distribution of treated drinking water. The Total Coliform Rule (TCR) helps to alert communities to possible microbial contamination as well as the adequacy of residual disinfection within the local distribution system. MWRA tests over 1500 samples per month. Under the SDWA, a violation of the TCR occurs when greater than 5% of the samples in a community are positive for total coliform during a month.

# Source Water – Microbial Results

## May 2003

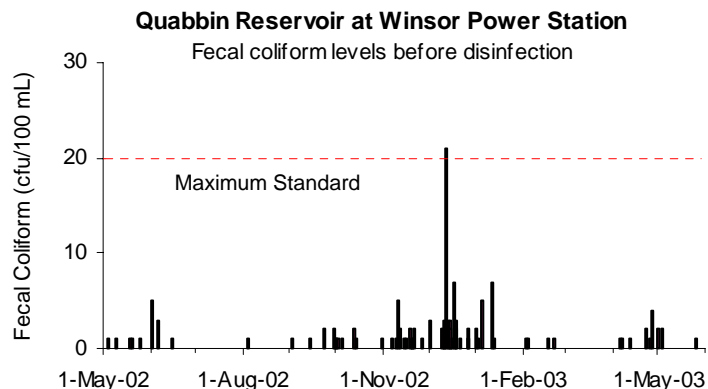
### Source Water - Microbial Results

Total coliform bacteria are monitored in both source and treated water to provide an indication of overall bacteriological activity. Most coliforms are harmless. Fecal coliform is a subclass of the coliform group which are identified by their growth at temperatures comparable to those in the intestinal tract of mammals. They act as indicators of possible fecal contamination. The Surface Water Treatment Rule for unfiltered supplies requires that no more than 10% of source water samples prior to disinfection over any six-month period have over 20 fecal coliforms per 100ml.

#### Sample Site: Quabbin Reservoir

Quabbin Reservoir water is sampled at Winsor Dam before entering the CVA system. MWRA met the six-month running average standard for fecal coliform continuously at this location over the last year.

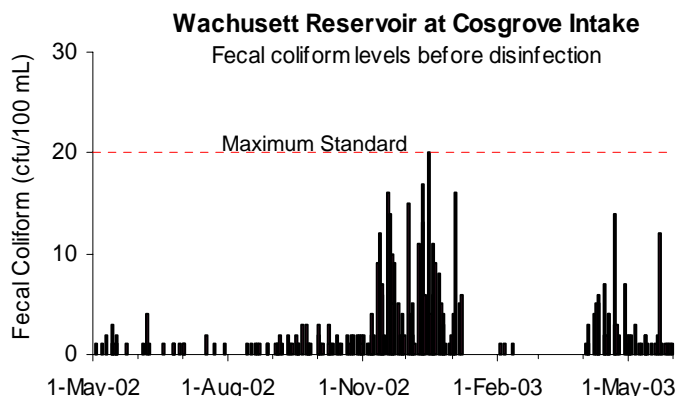
Three of the 30 samples were positive during May. Colony counts were in the single digits.



#### Sample Site: Wachusett Reservoir

Wachusett Reservoir water is sampled at Cosgrove Intake before entering the MetroWest and Metropolitan Boston systems. MWRA met the six-month running average standard for fecal coliform continuously at this location over the last year.

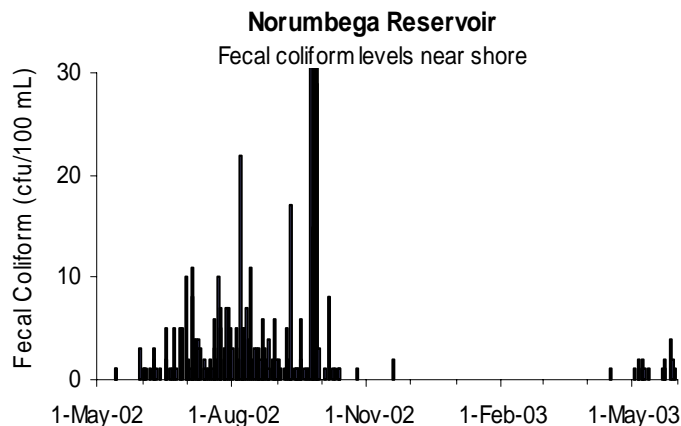
Eighteen of the 22 samples were positive during May. Colony counts did not exceed the standard of 20 cfu/100 ml.



#### Sample Site: Norumbega Reservoir

Norumbega Reservoir in Weston receives flows from Wachusett for temporary storage each day during low demand hours, which are then discharged during high demand. Norumbega water is sampled from the shore near the gatehouse before disinfection. Coliform levels are elevated periodically, partly because samples collected from the shore of this small reservoir are more susceptible to local disturbances. Covered storage is scheduled to replace this open reservoir in 2004.

Thirteen of the 30 samples from water taken along the shore were positive for fecal coliform during May. Colony counts were in the single digits.

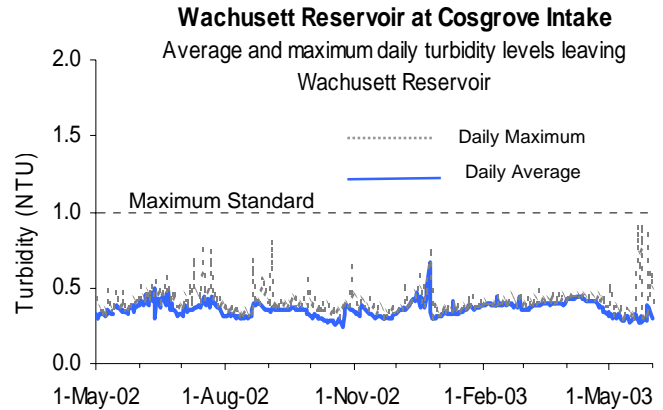
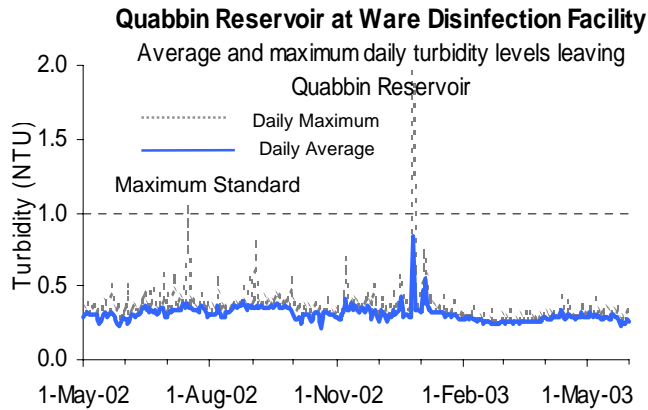


# Source Water – Turbidity and Algae Results May 2003

## Source Water – Turbidity Results

Turbidity is a measure of suspended and colloidal particles including clay, silt, organic and inorganic matter, algae and microorganisms. The effects of turbidity depend on the nature of the matter that causes the turbidity. High levels of particulate matter may have a higher chlorine demand or may protect bacteria from the disinfectant effects of chlorine, thereby interfering with the disinfectant residual throughout the distribution system.

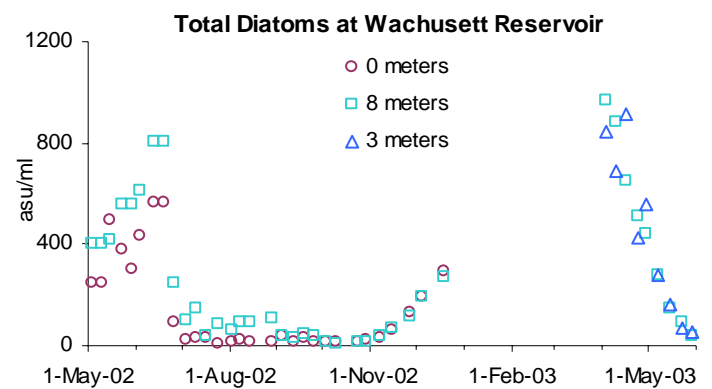
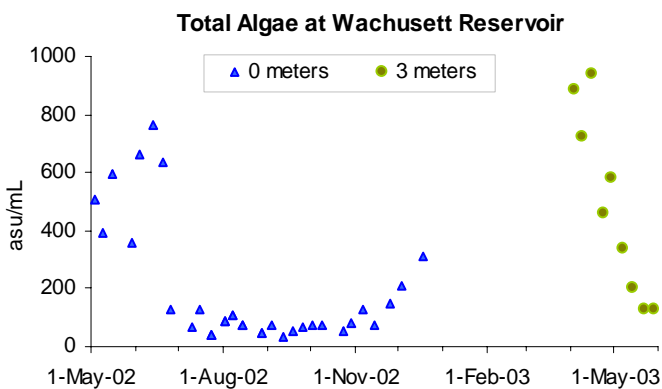
Samples for turbidity from Quabbin Reservoir are collected at the Ware Disinfection Facility before chlorination. Samples are also taken at Cosgrove Intake before chlorination. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection standard for source water turbidity for unfiltered water supply systems is a maximum of 1.0 NTU; the EPA standard is a maximum of 5.0 NTU. Maximum turbidity results at the Wachusett and Quabbin Reservoir were within DEP standards for the month. The Wachusett Reservoir had a number of very short spikes which were attributed to renovations and upgrades being performed at Cosgrove Disinfection Facility.



## Source Water – Algae Results

Algal levels in reservoirs are monitored by MDC and MWRA. These results, along with taste and odor complaints, are used to make decisions on source water treatment for algae control.

Most taste and odor complaints at the tap are due to algae, which originate in source reservoirs, typically in trace amounts. Occasionally, a particular species grows rapidly, increasing its concentration in water. When *Synura*, *Anabaena*, or other nuisance algae blooms, MWRA may treat the reservoirs with copper sulfate, an algacide. Of 82 complaints received during May from local water departments, four concerned taste and odor that may be due to algae. Diatom levels have declined sharply since winter. High levels of diatoms will foul home filters rapidly.



# Treated Water – Disinfection and pH Results

## May 2003

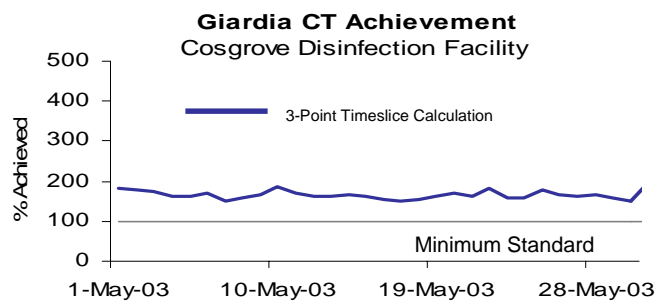
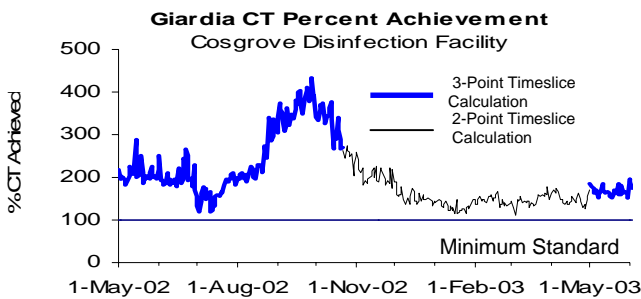
### Treated Water - Primary Disinfection

#### Wachusett Reservoir at Cosgrove Disinfection Facility (MetroBoston Supply):

MWRA provides disinfection adequate to achieve EPA's requirement of 99.9% inactivation of *Giardia* cysts and 99.99% inactivation of viruses in drinking water using a calculation based on three sample points that DEP approved in June, 1999. The two-point timeslice, three-point timeslice, or integrated methods are alternative calculation methods which can also be used to comply with CT regulations.

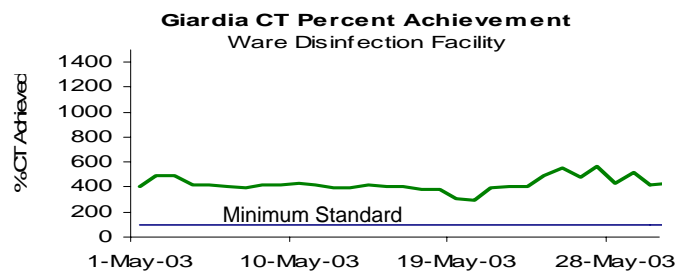
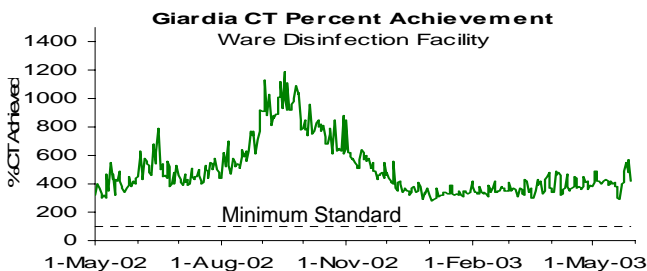
CT achievement for *Giardia* assures CT achievement for viruses, which have a lower CT requirement. The concentration (C) of the disinfectant in the water over time (T) yields a measure of the effectiveness of disinfection, CT. The required CT varies with disinfectant type, water temperature, pH, and other factors. MWRA calculates daily CT inactivation rates at maximum flow, as specified by EPA regulations.

The sample pump at Shaft A was replaced on the April 29th. This pump is necessary to report the three-point timeslice method. Three-point timeslice reporting was initiated May 1st. Chlorine dose was lowered on the 7th to 1.7 mg/L from 1.8 mg/L. CT was met each day in May, as well as every day for the last year.



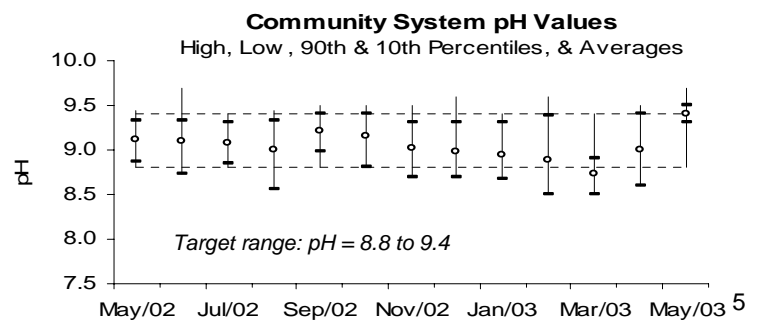
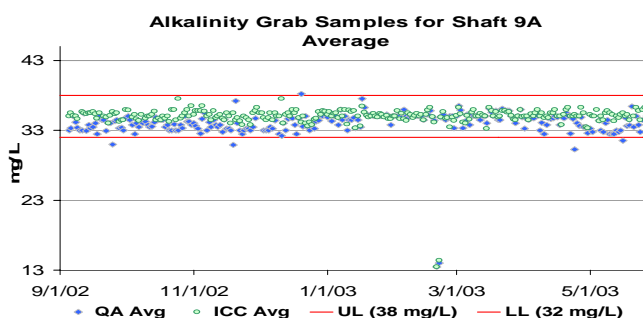
#### Quabbin Reservoir at Ware Disinfection Facility (CVA Supply):

Chlorine dose remained at 1.2 mg/L. CT was met each day in May, as well as every day for the last year.



### Treated Water – pH Results

MWRA adjusts the alkalinity and pH of Wachusett water to reduce its corrosivity in order to minimize the leaching of lead and copper from service lines and home plumbing systems into the water. MWRA's target for distribution system pH is 9.1. Upper and lower target bands are 8.8 and 9.4: MWRA's goal is to have 80% of distribution system samples fall between these targets. MWRA staff collects and analyzes samples for pH from 28 community locations on a biweekly schedule to measure pH levels. In May, 68% of the samples were within the target range.



# Bacteria & Chlorine Residual Results for Communities in MWRA Testing Program May 2003

## Background

While all communities collect bacteria samples for the Total Coliform Rule (TCR), 36 cities and towns (including Westboro State Hospital) use the MWRA Laboratory for Total Coliform Rule compliance testing. These communities collect samples for bacteriological analysis and measure water temperature and chlorine residual at the time of collection. Cambridge conducts their own monitoring. The other 9 MWRA customer communities have their samples tested elsewhere and these towns should be contacted directly for their monthly results.

There are 144 sampling locations for which the MWRA is required to report TCR results. This includes a subset of the community TCR locations as well as sites along the MWRA transmission system, water storage tanks and pumping stations.

The SDWA requires that no more than 5% of all samples may be total coliform positive in a month (or that no more than 1 sample be positive when less than 40 samples are collected each month). Public notification is required if this standard is exceeded.

*Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*) is a specific coliform species that is almost always present in fecal material and whose presence indicates likely bacterial contamination of fecal origin. If *E. coli* are detected in a drinking water sample, this is considered evidence of a critical public health concern. Additional testing is conducted immediately and joint corrective action by DEP, MWRA, and the community is undertaken. Public notification is required if follow-up tests confirm the presence of *E. coli* or total coliform. MWRA considers a disinfectant residual of 0.2 mg/L a minimum target level at all points in the distribution system.

## Highlights

None of the 1717 community samples (0.00% system-wide) tested positive for confirmed total coliform during the month of May. One of the 670 MWRA samples (0.15%) tested positive for confirmed total coliform. No samples tested positive for *E. coli*. No towns failed the TCR rule for the month.

All thirty-six communities that submitted chlorine residual data maintained an average disinfectant residual of at least 0.2 mg/L. 1.5% of the community samples had a disinfectant residual lower than 0.2 mg/L.

TCR results by Community								
Town	Samples Tested for Coliform (a)	Total Coliform # (%) Positive	E.coli % Positive	Public Notification Required?	May 2003 Minimum Chlorine Residual (mg/L)	May 2002 Minimum Chlorine Residual (mg/L)	May 2003 Average Chlorine Residual (mg/L)	May 2002 Average Chlorine Residual (mg/L)
ARLINGTON	69	0 (0%)			0.01	0.05	0.86	0.86
BELMONT	32	0 (0%)			0.35	0.02	1.09	0.74
BOSTON	239	0 (0%)			0.86	0.45	1.32	1.39
BROOKLINE	68	0 (0%)			1.26	1.04	1.42	1.51
CHELSEA	32	0 (0%)			0.48	0.12	1.23	1.28
EVERETT	40	0 (0%)			0.51	0.48	0.92	1.15
FRAMINGHAM (c)	72	0 (0%)			0.71	0.57	1.41	1.40
LEXINGTON	36	0 (0%)			0.37	1.04	1.31	1.44
LYNNFIELD	6	0 (0%)			0.30	0.91	0.95	1.38
MALDEN	60	0 (0%)			0.78	0.05	0.98	0.96
MARBLEHEAD	24	0 (0%)			0.26	0.29	1.14	1.24
MARLBOROUGH (b)(c)	52	0 (0%)			0.74	0.42	1.10	1.22
MEDFORD	68	0 (0%)			0.25	0.11	1.01	1.07
MELROSE	36	0 (0%)			0.03	0.07	0.80	1.04
MILTON	32	0 (0%)			0.56	0.64	1.10	1.21
NAHANT	10	0 (0%)			0.30	0.15	0.97	0.85
NEEDHAM (b)	41	0 (0%)			0.18	0.04	0.92	1.03
NEWTON	88	0 (0%)			1.06	0.96	1.42	1.42
NORTHBOROUGH	13	0 (0%)			1.39	0.83	1.67	1.71
NORWOOD	36	0 (0%)			0.02	0.02	0.92	0.89
QUINCY	92	0 (0%)			0.39	0.14	1.20	1.25
REVERE	65	0 (0%)			0.42	0.41	1.27	1.26
SAUGUS	32	0 (0%)			1.19	1.16	1.35	1.49
SOMERVILLE	80	0 (0%)			0.05	0.06	1.05	1.05
SOUTHBOROUGH (c)	10	0 (0%)			0.31	0.44	1.08	0.98
STONEHAM	35	0 (0%)			0.77	0.65	1.29	1.33
SWAMPSCOTT	18	0 (0%)			1.17	0.21	1.26	1.07
WAKEFIELD (b)	55	0 (0%)			0.54	0.14	1.14	0.98
WALTHAM	68	0 (0%)			0.01	0.05	0.91	1.26
WATERTOWN	50	0 (0%)			0.34	0.24	1.06	1.12
WELLESLEY (b)	36	0 (0%)			0.05	0.14	0.44	0.56
WESTBORO HOSPITAL	5	0 (0%)			0.02	0.06	0.11	0.36
WESTON (c)	16	0 (0%)			0.33	0.03	1.52	0.65
WINCHESTER (b)	20	0 (0%)			0.07	0.21	0.71	1.02
WINTHROP	24	0 (0%)			0.62	0.80	1.16	1.31
WOBURN (b)	57	0 (0%)			0.13	0.03	0.75	0.59
Total:	1717	0 (0%)						
MASS. WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY (d)	670	1 (0.15%)		no	0.01	0.02	1.22	1.30

(a) The number of samples collected depends on the population served and the number of repeat samples required.

(b) These communities are partially supplied, and may mix their chlorinated supply with MWRA chloraminated supply.

(c) These communities locally chloramine.

(d) MWRA sampling program includes a subset of community TCR sites as well as sites along the transmission system, tanks and pumping stations.

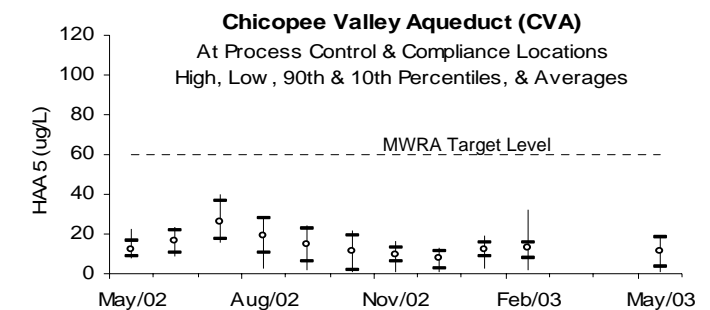
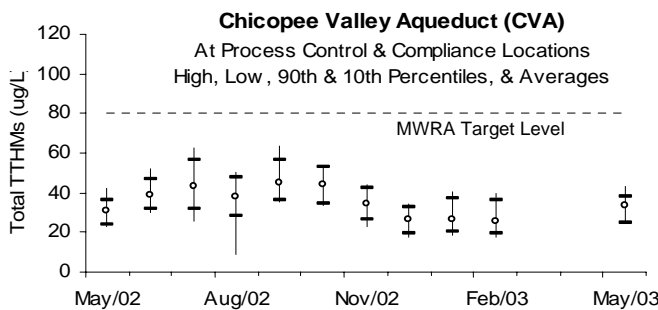
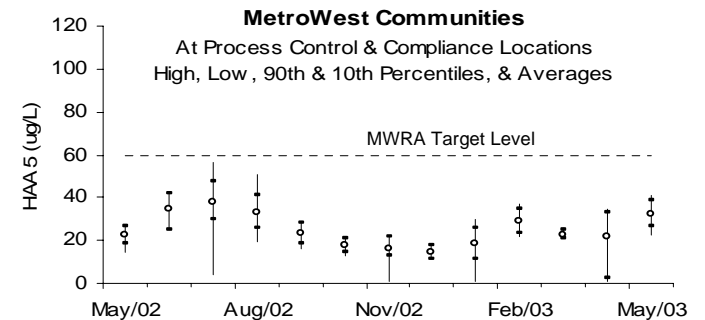
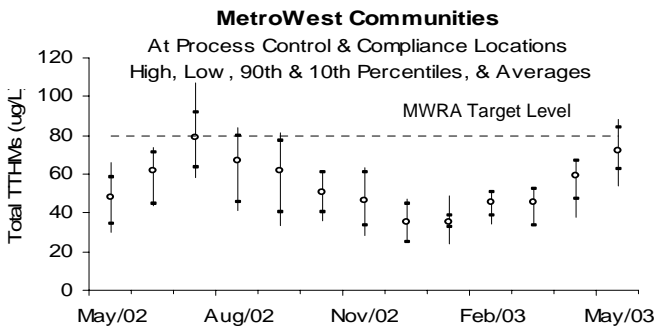
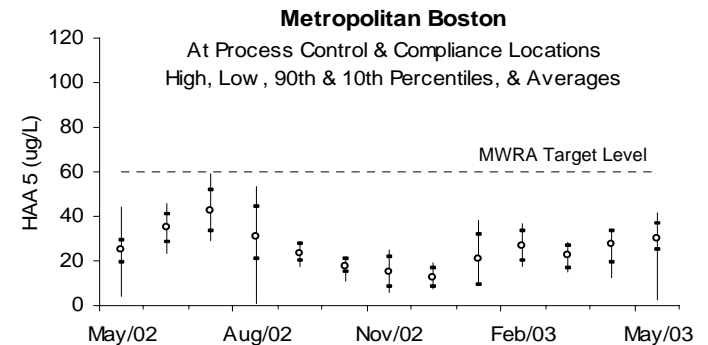
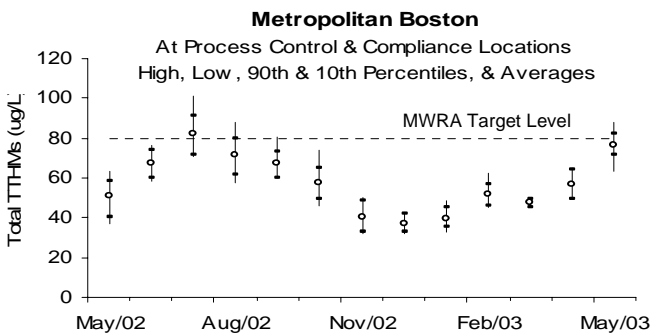
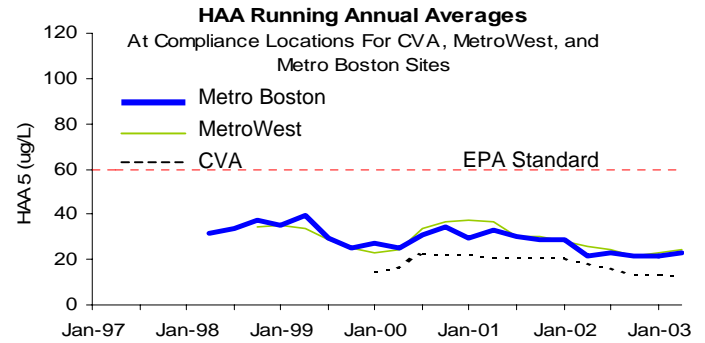
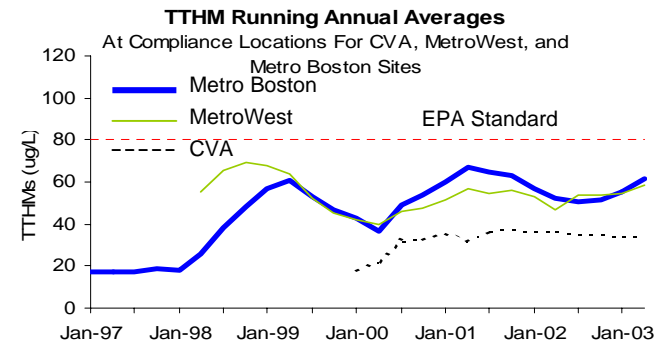
# Treated Water - Disinfection By-Product (DBP) Levels in Communities May 2003

Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) and Haloacetic Acids (HAAs) are by-products of disinfection treatment with chlorine. Chlorination levels, the presence of organic precursors, pH levels, the contact time of water with chlorine used for disinfection, and temperature all affect TTHM and HAA levels. DBPs are of concern due to their potential adverse health effects at high levels. The EPA running annual average standards are 80 ug/L for TTHMs and 60 ug/L for HAA 5. DEP requires that compliance samples be collected quarterly. MWRA samples weekly at some locations, monthly and quarterly at others. **Metro Boston numbers are used for compliance purposes**; results presented below from CVA and MetroWest sampling sites enable MWRA staff to monitor control of MWRA treatment processes. Individual CVA and MetroWest communities are responsible for their own compliance monitoring and reporting. They must be contacted directly for their results.

The running annual average for TTHMs and HAA5s at compliance locations, represented in the graphs at the top of the page, remained below current standards. Average monthly TTHM and HAA5 levels at all process control sampling locations for the MetroWest and Metropolitan Boston communities are higher than those of last year. The CVA communities TTHM levels were slightly higher than last year while HAA5 levels were lower. DBPs have been rising due to the increase in the amount of natural organic matter in the Wachusett Reservoir.

## TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES

## HALOACETIC ACIDS



# MWRA Monthly Water Quality Analysis

## May 2003

This page provides information on water quality at six locations in the MWRA transmission system. Results reflect a "snapshot" in time and may not represent typical conditions. Elevated levels of a particular parameter may occur from time to time. MWRA staff review these numbers carefully and follow-up unusual results by re-analyzing samples, collecting new samples, or auditing sample sites. More rigorous daily or weekly monitoring of select parameters at these and other locations provides a better overall picture of water quality and is reported for some parameters elsewhere in this document. Monitoring for a number of parameters in this table will be reduced to quarterly, if they either (1) have minimal variability or (2) are always below detection levels.

Component	CVA System		Metropolitan Boston				Standards		
	Quabbin Reservoir at Ware Disinfection Facility (Raw)	Ludlow Monitoring Station (Treated)	Wachusett Reservoir at Cosgrove Intake (Raw)	ICC Marlboro (Treated)	Comm Ave., Newton (Treated)	Shaft 9A, Malden (Treated)	Standard	Units	Exceedance
Alkalinity	2.7	3.7	4.5	34.4	34.1	32.8		MG/L	
Aluminum	< 15	< 15	21	22	19	23	50-200 (d)	UG/L	NO
Ammonia-N	0.006	< 0.005	0.010	< 0.005	0.313	0.322		MG/L	
Antimony	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	6 (a)	UG/L	NO
Arsenic	< 0.8	< 0.8	< 0.8	< 0.8	< 0.8	< 0.8	50 (a)	UG/L	NO
Barium	5.6	5.6	10.2	10.2	9.7	9.8	2000 (a)	UG/L	NO
Beryllium	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	4 (a)	UG/L	NO
Bromate	< 2.5	< 2.5	< 2.5	< 2.5	< 2.5	< 2.5	10 (a)	UG/L	NO
Bromide	9.6	< 2.5	15.6	4.7	4.4	4.3		UG/L	
Cadmium	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	< 0.2	5 (a)	UG/L	NO
Calcium	2230	2270	5010	5000	4890	4920		UG/L	
Chloride	6.4	7.8	26.8	28.2	28.4	27.9	250 (d)	MG/L	NO
Chlorine, Free	NS	0.74	NS	0.53	NS	0.21		MG/L	
Chlorine, Total	NS	0.75	NS	0.63	1.59	1.79		MG/L	
Chromium	< 0.6	< 0.6	< 0.6	< 0.6	< 0.6	< 0.6	100 (a)	UG/L	NO
Coliform, Fecal, MF Method	0	NS	3	NS	NS	0	20 (b)	CFU/100 mL	NO
Coliform, Total, MF Method (e)	6	0	2	0	0	0	100 (b) 0 (c)	CFU/100 mL	NO
Copper **	0.9	< 0.9	2.8	4.6	3.0	6.0	1300 (a)	UG/L	NO
Cyanide	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.2 (a)	MG/L	NO
Fluoride	0.05	0.08	0.06	1.02	1.00	1.04	4 (a)	MG/L	NO
Hardness	7.8	7.9	16.4	16.3	16	16		MG/L	
Iron **	12.7	12.4	24.7	25.5	26.6	27	300 (d)	UG/L	NO
Lead	< 1.2	< 1.2	< 1.2	< 1.2	< 1.2	< 1.2	15 (a)	UG/L	NO
Magnesium	541	541	949	936	925	914		UG/L	
Manganese	4.5	2.4	9.8	14.5	9.0	8.8	50 (d)	UG/L	NO
Mercury	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	2 (a)	UG/L	NO
Nickel	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0		UG/L	
Nitrate-N	0.027	0.027	0.115	0.114	0.144	0.116	10 (a)	MG/L	NO
Nitrate+Nitrite - N	0.019	0.021	0.144	0.144	0.126	0.130		MG/L	
Nitrite	< 0.005	< 0.005	< 0.005	< 0.005	< 0.005	< 0.005	1 (a)	MG/L	NO
Orthophosphate	0.003	< 0.003	0.004	0.008	0.008	0.009		MG/L	
pH	6.9	6.8	6.9	9.3	9.3	9.5		S.U.	
Potassium	511	495	935	948	928	925		UG/L	
Selenium	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.9	50 (a)	UG/L	NO
Silica (SiO2)	1330	1370	2940	3320	3150	3180		UG/L	
Silver	< 0.4	< 0.4	< 0.4	< 0.4	< 0.4	< 0.4	100 (d)	UG/L	NO
Sodium	4.2	5.1	15.7	30.4	30.1	29.6		MG/L	
Specific Conductance	44	47	127	190	173	173		UMHO/cm	
Standard Plate Count, HPC (48 Hrs @ 35C)	NS	NS	3	9	5	1	500 (c)	CFU/mL	NO
Sulfate (SO4)	5.3	5.3	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.2		MG/L	
Thallium	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	2 (a)	UG/L	NO
Total Dissolved Solids	30	27	85	124	111	105		MG/L	
Total Organic Carbon	1.66	1.85	2.30	2.24	2.29	2.34		MG/L	
Total Phosphorus	< 0.005	< 0.005	0.009	0.013	0.010	0.009		MG/L	
UV-254	0.019	0.015	0.065	0.048	0.054	0.054		A	
Zinc **	0.9	1.3	4.3	3.6	3.1	2.6	5000 (d)	UG/L	NO

(a) = Primary MCL standard (health related). DEP "Drinking Water Regulations", 310CMR 22.00.

(b) = Primary MCL standard (health related), applies to source (raw) water only. DEP "Drinking Water Regulations", 310CMR 22.00.

(c) = Primary MCL standard (health related). DEP "Drinking Water Regulations", 310CMR 22.00. Applies to samples of treated water downstream of Wachusett and Quabbin Reservoirs.

(d) = Secondary MCL standard (aesthetic related). DEP "Drinking Water Regulations", 310CMR 22.00.

(e) - Confirmed results only are reported

MCL = Maximum Contaminant Level

CFU = Colony Forming Unit

S.U. = Standard Units

UG/L = micrograms per liter = parts per billion

NS = No sample

NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

MG/L = milligrams per liter = parts per million

< = less than method detection limit

HPC = Heterotrophic Plate Count

Inv Res = Invalid sample result

\*\* = Metal results may be elevated due to local plumbing at the sample tap.

***Bold Italics = Quarterly Samples***

Most results are based on single grab samples collected on May 5rd and 6th, 2003 and analyzed by MWRA and contract laboratories.

**NOTE:** MWRA tests for cadmium and mercury are more sensitive than the EPA-set levels of detection and reporting. For cadmium any level below 1.0 ug/L and for mercury any level below 0.2 ug/L are under the EPA minimum detection limits. MWRA will continue to report any result below these detection limits here in the monthly report but will follow EPA reporting requirements and not report them in the EPA-regulated annual Consumer Confidence Report.