

Your Community



The City of Somerville
WATER DEPARTMENT
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Public Water Supply
3274000

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Water Superintendent

The City of Somerville Water Department is pleased to provide this annual newsletter to inform all of its residents about the water system and how it affects their drinking water. This annual newsletter is particularly beneficial to new customers and residents who may not be aware of how Somerville purchases its water and how it is distributed to the user.

The City of Somerville purchases all of its water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The water is delivered through seven MWRA master meters into the city's distribution system. The system consists of pipes, valves, hydrants and service lines, which deliver the water to homes, businesses, and other facilities for drinking and other uses such as fire protection.

Somerville's distribution system is comprised of approximately 120 miles of water mains ranging from four inch to twenty inches in diameter. The majority of this system was installed in the late 1800's to early 1900's. Unlined water mains allow tuberculation (rust) to grow on the inside surfaces of the pipe. While not a health problem, these tubercles can affect the ability of the pipe to carry flows for fire fighting purposes and can affect the appearance of the water, such as yellow and red water problems. This year, we flushed approximately 149,000 ft. of pipe. In addition, the City replaced approximately 2,000 feet of older water main.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. All testing during 2012 was normal. The most frequently asked question that we receive about water quality concerns the potential of lead in tap water. The answer is simple: the water we supply to your home does not contain any lead. If any lead is present at the tap, it has been picked up through contact with brass fixtures or with lead elsewhere on the premises, such as lead solder used in plumbing work. Lead water services (the pipe running from the house foundation to the water main in the street) may also be a factor. However, lead has not been used for water services or in household pipes since before World War II. Although the majority of homes dating from this earlier era either never used lead or have since had their water service replaced, there are still a small number of lead services in place.

This year Somerville tested below the Lead Action Level. The city tested below the 90th percentile lead action level (15ppb) at 3.54 ppb. The city continues to promote a Lead Service Line Replacement program and lead service lines are replaced as applicable. As part of this program, the Water Department reviews the yearly street reconstruction work before it begins to determine if the service line that is owned and controlled by the city is made of lead. With the help of a pipeline assistance loan from the MWRA and city funds, 65 lead services were replaced in 2012.

MWRA and Somerville test 22 water samples each week for total coliform bacteria. The EPA requires that no more than 5% of the samples in a month may be positive. Somerville had 1.8% positive results in the month of July 2012. All follow-up samples were clear, and this was not a concern.

The Water Department is available to answer any questions you may have regarding any water related issues at 617-625-6600, ext. 5850. You can also visit the Water Department web page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/dpw/water-and-sewer>.

Ginger Barrett
Water Superintendent