



## The City of Somerville WATER DEPARTMENT

Public Water Supply  
# 3274000

The City of Somerville continues to inform all of its residents about the water system and how it affects their drinking water. This annual newsletter is 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 inches to twenty inches in diameter. The majority of this system was installed in the late 1800s to early 1900s. The citywide metering program is 99% complete. Customers have already benefited from the new wireless system that has the capability to notify the customer if there has been a spike in their average use indicating there may be a leak at the property. This particular feature has resulted in cost savings to customers and has reduced the amount of water wasted through household leaks.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. The results of regular monitoring are an indicator whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. During the course of our regular monitoring on November 19, 2010 the City of Somerville discovered a violation for total coliform in two areas of the city. The DEP and the MWRA were notified immediately and the City and the MWRA proceeded to work around the clock to obtain clean samples. This was achieved by an aggressive strategic flushing plan, opening hydrants in the affected area flushing service lines, checking the taps at the sampling sites and checking for closed gates in the affected areas where a \$24 million construction project had just been completed. The city did find closed gates in both areas causing dead ended lines, which we believe were the cause of the situation. Since this event all testing has been 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 (15ppb) at 10.2 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 a service line that is owned and controlled by the city is made of lead. With the help of a pipeline assistance grant from the MWRA and city funds, eleven lead services were replaced in 2010.

Additional information regarding lead in your tap water is detailed on page 5 of this brochure. The Water Department is available to answer any questions you may have regarding any water related issues, or on public meetings at 617-625-6600, ext. 5850.

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