



The City of Somerville, Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Public Water Supply
3274000

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Mayor

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Water Superintendent

The City of Somerville Water Department, in conjunction with the MWRA, is pleased to provide this annual newsletter to inform all of its residents about the water system and how it affects their drinking water.

The City of Somerville purchases all of its water from the 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 consists of approximately 120 miles of water mains ranging from four inches to twenty inches in diameter, much of which was installed in the late 1800s to early 1900s. To maintain the system, Somerville rehabilitates and replaces older unlined water mains. During 2014 the City replaced approximately 7,070 feet of older water main. These projects were funded, in part, with the help of the MWRA Local Water System Assistance Program. In addition, we flushed approximately 182,135 ft. of pipe to maintain water quality and fire flows.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. All testing during 2014 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 5.38 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. In 2014, 60 lead services were replaced.

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. In June, 1 sample (0.93%) showed a positive result. All follow-up samples were clear, and this was not a concern.

In January 2015, Somerville entered into an Administrative Consent Order with DEP regarding certified operator staffing levels. Somerville continues to strive to meet and maintain certified staffing levels.

The Water Department is available to answer any questions you may have regarding any water related issues or public meetings 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