Commonly asked questions

Is Greenfield's water hard?

No! There is a common misconception that all New England water is hard. This is not true. Greenfield's water is categorized "soft" meaning that it contains less than 75 ppm (less than 4 grains) of hardness.

Is Greenfield's water fluoridated?

No! Greenfield's drinking water is not, nor ever has been fluoridated. Parents should discuss their children's fluoride needs with their dentist and pediatrician.

Should I use hot water to make baby formula?

No. Hot water may contain impurities such as rust, copper and lead that come from the hot water heater and plumbing in your house. These impurities can generally dissolve into hot water faster than into cold water.

What is a Cross Connection? What Can I do about it?

A cross connection is a connection between a drinking water pipe and a polluted source. The pollution can come from your own home. For instance, you're going to spray fertilizer on your lawn. You hook up your hose to the sprayer that contains the fertilizer. If the water pressure drops (say because of fire hydrant use in the town) when the hose is connected to the fertilizer, the fertilizer may be sucked back into the drinking water pipes through the hose. Using an attachment on your hose called a backflow-prevention device can prevent this problem.

The DPW recommends the installation of backflow prevention devices, such as a low cost hose bib vacuum breaker, for all inside and outside hose connections. You can purchase this at a hardware store or plumbing supply store. This is a great way for you to help protect the water in your home as well as the drinking water system in your town. For additional information on cross connections and on the status of your water system's cross connection program, please contact the DPW at 413-772-1539.

WATER CONSERVATION TIP...

Ultra-low-flush toilets, which cost from under $100 to over $200 depending on the type purchased, use only about 1.6 gallons of water per flush. That could cut your family's total indoor water use by as much as 20%!

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Greenfield Water System Wins Award

In April 2010 the Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP) notified the town that it was one of thirty water systems in the state to receive the 2009 Public Water System Award for overall operation and management of the water system and the town's efforts in reducing the amount of unaccounted for water (leaks) in the system. In May four staff members went to the State House to receive the award on the town's behalf.

WATER QUALITY REPORT 2010

GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

MAYOR WILLIAM MARTIN

Greenfield Water Supply
Average daily consumption
1,750,500 gallons

LEYDEN GLEN RESERVOIR
SUPPLIES 30% OF WATER

GREEN RIVER
SUPPLIES 20% OF WATER

OAK HILL FILTER PLANT

MILLBROOK WELLFIELD
SUPPLIES 50% OF WATER

Water quality questions: 772-1539

Leaks, low pressure, meter problems, billing information: 772-1528

Department of Public Works Office Hours:
Mon. – Fri.: 7:00 am to 5:00 pm,

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791

Leyden Glen Reservoir in early autumn

This reservoir holds 45,000,000 gallons of water. It supplies 30% of the Town's needs and is the most economical source because it flows through the filter plant and into Town by gravity.

Photo by Forrest Herald, Water Operator

VOLUME XIII • REPORTING YEAR 2010
PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY # 1114000

Did you know?

Bottled Water ...

It's Expensive!

At $2.50 a liter (or $9.45 per gallon) for some of the pricier brands, it costs far more to drink bottled water than to fill up your gas tank. Yet, most people never question why they are willing to pay 3000 times more for bottled water than tap water! Currently, one gallon of tap water costs $0.003.

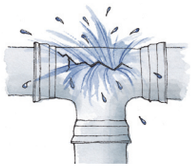
It's not the safest choice!

The majority of bottled water comes in plastic bottles, which unlike tap water, has no established limits or testing requirements for many contaminants including the chemical di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). Produced in plastics manufacturing, DEHP, a probable human carcinogen and hormone disrupting chemical migrates into water from plastic bottles. Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical found in polycarbonate plastic. Baby bottles and sippy cups have been made from this material for years and there are now questions about it effects on the endocrine system. The presence of chemicals in plastic bottles has begun a resurgence in the use of glass baby bottles. New parents should discuss this issue with their pediatrician.

It's not "green!"

Additionally, making plastic bottles in order to meet Americans' demand for bottled water annually consumes more than 1.5 million barrels of oil. In contrast to tap water, which is distributed through an energy efficient infrastructure, transporting bottled water long distances involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels.

Concerned your water bill is high?
You may have a leak! Call the DPW at 772-1528 and we will send a licensed water operator to your home or business to perform a free leak check.



SUBSTANCES DETECTED **Below are substances that were detected in the Town's drinking water during the years listed next to the parameter. None of these substances were detected above the allowable limit.**

CHEMICAL PARAMETERS

Substance/year	Units	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)*	Highest Level Detected	Range of Detected Levels	Ideal Goals (EPA's MCLG)*	Major Sources in Drinking Water
Nitrate '10	ppm	10.0	0.31	0.23 - 0.31	10.0	Runoff from fertilizer use; Erosion of natural deposits.
Chlorine '10	ppm	MRDL= 4	1.63	0.11 – 1.63	MRDLG = 4	Water treatment chemical used to control microbes
Total Trihalomethanes '10	ppb	80	13.1 Annual average	3.5– 22.0	0	Disinfection by-products
Haloacetic Acids '10	ppb	60	7.7 Annual average	0.5– 13	N/A	Disinfection by-products
Turbidity* '10	NTU	Treat tech* = 1	0.78	.02 - 0.78	none	Soil runoff
Lead '08	ppb	Action level*= 15	5.2 90th percentile	1.0 – 58.0 2 sites > 15	0	Household plumbing and service connections
Copper '08	ppm	Action level* = 1.3	0.98 90th percentile	0.10 - 1.67 2 sites > 1.3	1.3	Household plumbing and service connections
Sodium '10	ppm	20	20	3.9-20	N/A	Runoff from stormwater
Sulfate '09	ppm	N/A	47	10.0 - 47.0	N/A	Natural sources
Perchlorate '08	ppb	2	0.1	< 0.05 - 0.1	none	Fireworks. explosives

DEFINITIONS:

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there are no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL): 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.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG): The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

ppm: One part per million (this would be one penny in 10,000)

ppb: One part per billion (one penny in $10,000,000)

***Treatment Technique:** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

***Action Level:** The concentration of a contaminant that triggers treatment or other requirement that a water system must follow. Action levels are reported at the 90th percentile for homes at greatest risk.

***Turbidity:** Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.

Are there any precautions some of our customers should consider?
Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised 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, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Crytosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

The Town is mandated by EPA to include the following generic language about the health effects of certain contaminants and drinking water sources:

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 human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife;

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming;

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff and septic systems;

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

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

Regarding lead... If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Greenfield DPW is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, 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 water, you may wish to have your water tested. If you would like your water tested for lead at no charge please call the DPW at 413-772-1539. Additional information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead