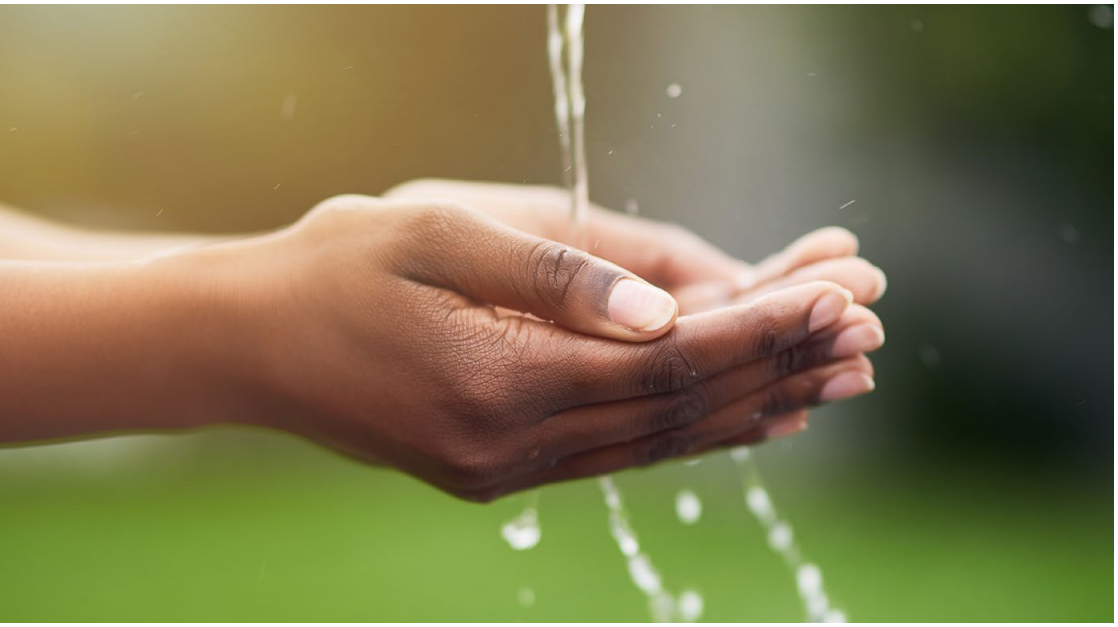
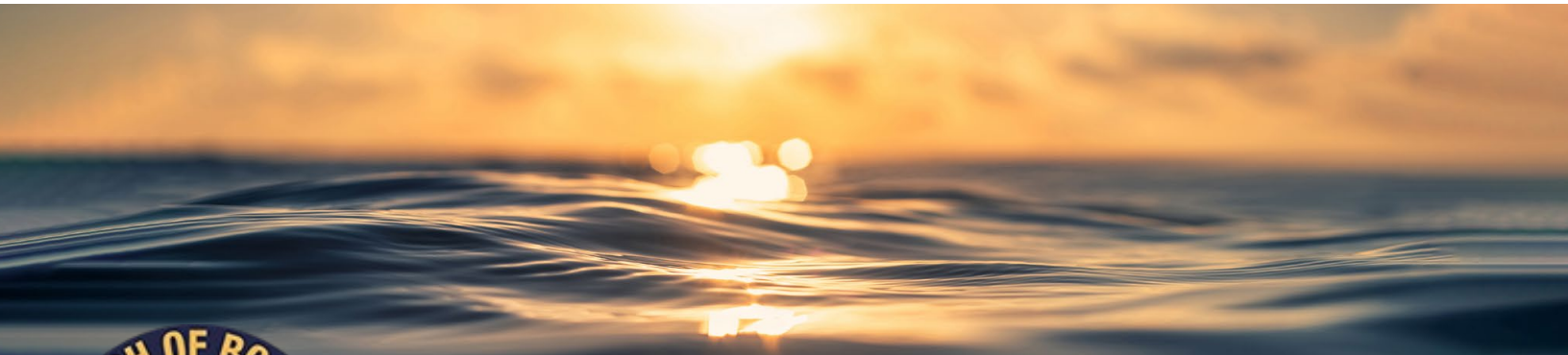
ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2025





Presented By

Borough of Rockaway

PWS ID#: NJ1434001

Landlords must distribute this information to every tenant as soon as practicable, but no later than three business days after receipt. Delivery must be done by hand, mail, or email, and by posting the information in a prominent location at the entrance of each rental premises, pursuant to section 3 of P.L. 2021, c. 82 (C.58:12A-12.4 et seq.).

Introduction

The Borough of Rockaway is proud to supply you with this year's water quality report, required by the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The tables in this report show the results of our water quality analyses in 2025. Every regulated contaminant detected in the water, even in the minutest traces, is listed. For each substance, the table contains the highest level allowed by regulation (MCL), the ideal goals for public health (MCLG), usual sources of such contamination, definitions that explain the testing, and a key to the units of measurement. The data tables in this report show only the substances detected in your water; other substances may have been tested and not detected.

Sources of Supply

The Borough of Rockaway draws its water from three groundwater wells and one backup well in the Quaternary Aquifer, located in the Upper Rockaway watershed. We use air stripping, activated carbon filtration, and disinfection and deliver the treated water to 3,026 homes and businesses, including portions of Rockaway Township and Denville.

Water Main Flushing

Distribution mains (pipes) convey water to homes, businesses, and hydrants in your neighborhood. The water entering distribution mains is of very high quality; however, water quality can deteriorate in areas of the distribution mains over time. Water main flushing is the process of cleaning the interior of water distribution mains by sending a rapid flow of water through them.

Flushing maintains water quality in several ways. For example, flushing removes sediments like iron and manganese. Although iron and manganese do not pose health concerns, they can affect the taste, clarity, and color of the water. Additionally, sediments can shield microorganisms from the disinfecting power of chlorine, contributing to the growth of microorganisms within distribution mains. Flushing helps remove stale water and ensures the presence of fresh water with sufficient dissolved oxygen and disinfectant levels and an acceptable taste and smell.

During flushing operations in your neighborhood, some short-term deterioration of water quality, though uncommon, is possible. You should avoid tap water for household uses at that time. If you do use the tap, allow your cold water to run for a few minutes at full velocity before use, and avoid using hot water to prevent sediment accumulation in your hot water tank.

Please contact us if you have any questions or if you would like more information on our water main flushing schedule.

Source Water Assessment

The Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) is a program of the NJDEP for the study of existing and potential threats to the quality of public drinking water sources throughout the state. Sources are rated depending on their contaminant susceptibility.

NJDEP has completed and issued the Source Water Assessment Report and Summary for this public water system, which is available at nj.gov/dep/watersupply/swap/index.html or by contacting the NJDEP, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water, at (609) 292-5550 or watersupply@dep.nj.gov. If a system is rated highly susceptible for a contaminant category, it does not mean a customer is or will be consuming contaminated drinking water. The rating reflects the potential for contamination of source water, not the existence of contamination. Public water systems are required to monitor for regulated contaminants and install treatment if any contaminants are detected at frequencies and concentrations above allowable levels. As a result of the assessments, NJDEP may customize (change existing) monitoring schedules based on the susceptibility ratings.

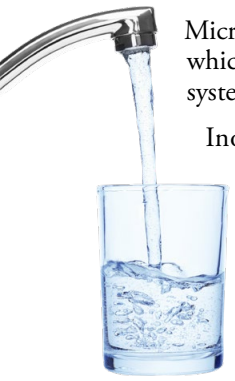
Source water protection is a long-term dedication to clean and safe drinking water. It is more cost-effective to prevent contamination than to address it after the fact. Every member of the community has an important role in source water protection. NJDEP recommends controlling activities and development around drinking water sources, whether through land acquisition, stormwater drain protection, or hazardous waste collection programs. Information is based on the three sources of water supplied from the borough's wells.

	H	M	L
Pathogens		3	
Nutrients	3		
Pesticides		1	2
Volatile Organic Compounds	3		
Inorganics		3	
Radionuclides		3	
Radon	3		
Disinfection By-Product Precursors	3		

QUESTIONS? If you have any questions about this report or about the operations of the water utility, please call Water Department at (973) 627-2000. We want our customers to be fully informed about our water utility.

Substances That Could Be in Water

The 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 from 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 occur naturally in the soil or groundwater or may result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming;

Pesticides and Herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses;

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 stormwater runoff, and septic systems; and

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

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

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily mean that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or visiting epa.gov/safewater.

Community Participation

If you would like further information, please attend any of our regularly scheduled mayor-and-council meetings. These meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the Community Center on Union Street.

Lead in Home Plumbing

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. Rockaway Borough Water Department is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home. You share the responsibility for protecting yourself and your family from the lead in your home plumbing. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Before drinking tap water, flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap, taking a shower, or doing laundry or a load of dishes. You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute-accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have it tested, contact Rockaway Borough Water Department at (973) 627-2000. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at epa.gov/safewater/lead.

To address lead in drinking water, public water systems were required to develop and maintain an inventory of service line materials by October 16, 2024. Developing an inventory and identifying the location of lead service lines (LSL) is the first step for beginning LSL replacement and protecting public health. The lead service inventory may be viewed by calling (973) 627-2000. Please contact us if you would like more information about the inventory or any lead sampling that has been done.

Fixtures With Green Stains

A green or blue-green stain on kitchen or bathroom fixtures is caused by tiny amounts of copper that dissolve in your home's copper plumbing system when the water sits unused overnight. Copper staining may be the result of a leaky faucet or a faulty toilet flush valve, so be sure your plumbing is in good working order.

Copper stains may also be caused by overly hot tap water. Generally speaking, you should maintain your water temperature at a maximum of 120 degrees Fahrenheit. You should consult the owner's manual for your heater or check with your plumber to determine your current heat setting. Lowering your water temperature will reduce the staining problem and save you money on your energy bill.

Also keep in mind that a tap that is used often throughout the day usually will not produce copper stains, so if you flush the tap for a minute or so before using the water for cooking or drinking, copper levels will be reduced.

What Are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of manufactured chemicals used worldwide since the 1950s to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. During production and use, PFAS can migrate into the soil, water, and air. Most PFAS do not break down; they remain in the environment, ultimately finding their way into drinking water. Because of their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, PFAS are found all over the world at low levels. Some PFAS can build up in people and animals with repeated exposure over time.

The most commonly studied PFAS are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). PFOA and PFOS have been phased out of production and use in the United States, but other countries may still manufacture and use them.

Some products that may contain PFAS include:

- Some grease-resistant paper, fast food containers/wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, pizza boxes
- Nonstick cookware
- Stain-resistant coatings used on carpets, upholstery, and other fabrics
- Water-resistant clothing
- Personal care products (shampoo, dental floss) and cosmetics (nail polish, eye makeup)
- Cleaning products
- Paints, varnishes, and sealants

Even though recent efforts to remove PFAS have reduced the likelihood of exposure, some products may still contain them. If you have questions or concerns about products you use in your home, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at (800) 638-2772. For a more detailed discussion on PFAS, please visit bit.ly/3Z5AMm8.

FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease)

You may not be aware of it, but every time you pour fat, oil, or grease (FOG) down your sink (e.g., bacon grease), you are contributing to a costly problem in the sewer collection system. FOG coats the inner walls of the plumbing in your house as well as the walls of underground piping throughout the community. Over time, these greasy materials build up and form blockages in pipes, which can lead to wastewater backing up into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains. These backups allow FOG to contaminate local waters, including drinking water. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public health hazard. FOG discharged into septic systems and drain fields can also cause malfunctions, resulting in more frequent tank pump-outs and other expenses.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year to unplug or replace grease-blocked pipes, repair pump stations, and clean up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Here are some tips that you and your family can follow to help maintain a well-run system now and in the future:

NEVER:

- Pour FOG down the house or storm drains.
- Dispose of food scraps by flushing them.
- Use the toilet as a wastebasket.

ALWAYS:

- Scrape and collect FOG into a waste container such as an empty coffee can, and dispose of it with your garbage.
- Place food scraps in waste containers or garbage bags for disposal with solid wastes.
- Place a wastebasket in each bathroom for solid wastes like disposable diapers, creams and lotions, and personal hygiene products, including nonbiodegradable wipes.

Tap vs. Bottled

Thanks in part to aggressive marketing, the bottled water industry has successfully convinced us all that water purchased in bottles is a healthier alternative to tap water. However, according to a four-year study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water. In fact, about 40 percent of bottled water is actually just tap water, according to government estimates.

The FDA is responsible for regulating bottled water, but these rules allow for less rigorous testing and purity standards than those required by the U.S. EPA for community tap water. For instance, the high mineral content of some bottled waters makes them unsuitable for babies and young children. Further, the FDA completely exempts bottled water that's packaged and sold within the same state, which accounts for about 70 percent of all bottled water sold in the United States.

People spend 10,000 times more per gallon for bottled water than they typically do for tap water. If you get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to $1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about 49 cents. Even if you installed a filter device on your tap, your annual expenditure would be far less than what you'd pay for bottled water.

For a detailed discussion on the NRDC study results, visit goo.gl/Jxb6xG.

Test Results

Our water is monitored for many different kinds of substances on a very strict sampling schedule, and the water we deliver must meet specific health standards. Here, we only show those substances that were detected in our water (a complete list of all our analytical results is available upon request). Remember that detecting a substance does not mean the water is unsafe to drink; our goal is to keep all detects below their respective maximum allowed levels.

The state recommends monitoring for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data is included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

Call us at (973) 627-2000 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Testing is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water.

We participated in the fifth stage of the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR5) program by performing additional tests on our drinking water. UCMR5 sampling benefits the environment and public health by providing the U.S. EPA with data on the occurrence of contaminants suspected to be in drinking water to determine if it needs to introduce new regulatory standards to improve drinking water quality. Unregulated contaminant monitoring data is available to the public, so please feel free to contact us if you are interested in obtaining this information. If you would like more information on the U.S. EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, please call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised 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 may be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health-care providers. The U.S. EPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES [1]

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Alpha Emitters (pCi/L)	2024	15	0	ND	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2024	2	2	0.0226	NA	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	2025	[4]	[4]	0.41	0.25–0.56	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Chromium (ppb)	2024	100	100	1.12	NA	No	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; Erosion of natural deposits
Combined Radium (pCi/L)	2024	5	0	ND	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	2024	4	4	0.2	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive that promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Haloacetic Acids [HAA5] (ppb)	2025	60	NA	1.03	0.86–1.19	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2025	10	10	1.63	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Selenium (ppb)	2024	50	50	6	NA	No	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from mines
Total Trihalomethanes [TTHMs] (ppb)	2025	80	NA	8.5	5.08–11.97	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Uranium (ppb)	2024	30	0	ND	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH %ILE)	RANGE LOW-HIGH	SITES ABOVE AL/TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper [Round 1] (ppm)	2025	1.3	1.3	0.0852	0.0127–0.19	0/40	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper [Round 2] (ppm)	2025	1.3	1.3	0.293	0.006–0.612	0/41	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead [Round 1] (ppb)	2025	15	0	4.85	2–8.24	0/40	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead [Round 2] (ppb)	2025	15	0	3.37	2–10.7	0/41	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	RUL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Hardness [as CaCO3] (ppm)	2021	250	NA	183	NA	No	Naturally occurring
Iron (ppb)	2024	300	NA	0.2	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
Manganese (ppb)	2024	50	NA	0.002	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits
pH (units)	2024	6.5–8.5	NA	7.58	7.58–7.79	No	Naturally occurring
Sodium (ppm)	2025	50[2]	NA	102	99–117	No	Naturally occurring
Sulfate (ppm)	2024	250	NA	16.7	NA	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
Total Dissolved Solids [TDS] (ppm)	2024	500	NA	548	NA	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Zinc (ppm)	2024	5	NA	0.0125	ND–0.0125	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Nickel (ppb)	2024	0.5	NA	Naturally occurring
Perfluorononanoic Acid [PFNA] (ppt)	2025	ND	NA	Discharge from industrial chemical factories
Perfluorooctanesulfonate Acid [PFOS] (ppt)	2025	5.36	ND–8.27	Used in the production of Teflon, firefighting foams, cleaners, cosmetics, greases and lubricants, paints, polishes, adhesives, and photographic films
Perfluorooctanoic Acid [PFOA] (ppt)	2025	9.37	ND–12.9	Used in the production of Teflon, firefighting foams, cleaners, cosmetics, greases and lubricants, paints, polishes, adhesives, and photographic films

About Our Violation

During 2024, we did not complete all of the required lead and copper tap sampling. We are required to monitor your drinking water for lead and copper on a regular schedule, and the results tell us whether the water meets the action levels set to protect public health. Because the required monitoring was not completed during this period, we could not confirm the lead and copper levels in your drinking water during that time. To correct this, the system returned to standard lead and copper monitoring beginning January 1, 2025, collecting samples from at least 40 sites during each six-month monitoring period as required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

[1] Under a waiver granted on December 30, 1998, by the NJDEP, our system does not have to monitor for synthetic organic chemicals (SOCs)/pesticides because several years of testing have indicated that these substances do not occur in our source water. The Safe Drinking Water Act regulations allow monitoring waivers to reduce or eliminate the monitoring requirements for asbestos, volatile organic chemicals, and SOCs. Our system received monitoring waivers for SOCs and asbestos.

[2] For healthy individuals, the sodium intake from water is not important because a much greater intake of sodium takes place from salt in the diet. However, sodium levels above the RUL may be a concern to individuals on a sodium-restricted diet.

Definitions

90th %ile: The levels reported for lead and copper represent the 90th percentile of the total number of sites tested. The 90th percentile is equal to or greater than 90% of our lead and copper detections.

AL (Action Level): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

Herbicide: Any chemical(s) used to control undesirable vegetation.

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

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

MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level): 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.

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

NA: Not applicable.

ND (Not detected): Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

pCi/L (picocuries per liter): A measure of radioactivity.

Pesticide: Generally, any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest.

ppb (parts per billion): One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

ppm (parts per million): One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

ppt (parts per trillion): One part substance per trillion parts water (or nanograms per liter).

RUL (Recommended Upper Limit): These standards are developed to protect aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.