

# 2014 Water Quality Report

## Columbus and Fort Benning, Georgia

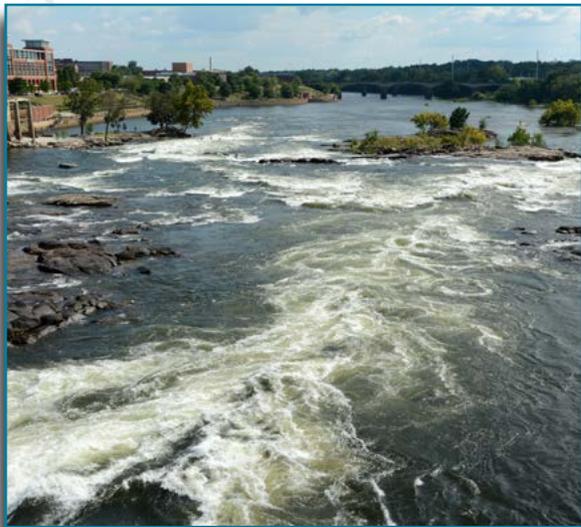


Photo Credit: Jim Cawthorne, Camera 1

### *Dear Customer,*

Columbus Water Works is continually working to ensure the water we provide to our customers is safe and reliable. This Water Quality Report is a great opportunity to share with you how your drinking water measures up against the standards for safe drinking water. As you can see through the data, the drinking water provided for our customers meets or exceeds all of the standards.

It is also a great honor to have been named among 9 other utilities across the United States for Sustainable Management. This award is comprehensive with high standards for an organization's management practices in several categories: Customer Service, Environmental Protection, Economic Development and Public Health. We would like to thank our customers for supporting us, so we can provide you with the highest quality product and service.

*Steve Davis,*

President of Columbus Water Works

### *What Should I Know About My Drinking Water?*

Water is an essential part of life. It is vital that the water we drink is properly cleaned and monitored for safety. To help ensure the safety of drinking water, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets certain standards that every water provider must meet. These standards help to ensure that your water is safe for you and your family. It is your right to know exactly how your water measures up to these standards.

### *Possible Water Contaminants:*

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:

- (a) Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and/or wildlife.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm-water runoff, and/or residential uses.
- (d) 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/or septic systems.
- (e) 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. 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 indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hot-line (800-426-4791).

**For additional information about the quality of your water, please contact William Kent, Manager of Environmental Services at (706) 649-3480 or visit our website at [www.cwwga.org](http://www.cwwga.org).**



## What is Your Water Source?

The water source for Columbus and Fort Benning, Georgia is the Chattahoochee River, which is surface water. Columbus Water Works operates and treats water for its customers under permit #CS2150000. The Chattahoochee River has been providing the area with a safe and dependable water supply for 112 years.

## Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies Sustainable Water Utility Management Award

Columbus Water Works received the 2014 Sustainability Award from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies. There were only 9 utilities who were honored with this award for demonstrating excellence in customer service, environmental protection, economic development and public health.



## Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP):

A Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) was completed by Columbus Water Works in March 2001. The purpose of this plan is to identify potential contamination sources throughout the watershed and to determine the risk these sources pose to the water supply intake. The SWAP is regularly reviewed to ensure its accuracy. Based on the assessment, the overall contaminant susceptibility for Columbus and Fort Benning residents is LOW. Some Potential Pollution Sources (PPS) include: a marina with fuel stations, sewer lift stations and pipelines, commercial and industrial areas, residential lawns, and golf courses. A complete list of all PPSs, their substances of concern, and the assessment methods are in the SWAP. For more information, please contact William Kent, Manager of Environmental Services at (706)649-3490 or [wkent@cwvwa.org](mailto:wkent@cwvwa.org).

## Immuno-compromised:

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 *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hot-line (800-426-4791).

## Lead In Drinking Water:

If present, elevated levels of lead in your drinking water 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. Columbus Water Works 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. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hot-line (800-426-4791) or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

## Other Water Contaminants:

*Cryptosporidium* is a protozoan parasite too small to be seen without a microscope. It is common in surface waters like lakes and rivers, especially when waters contain a high amount of sewage or animal waste. This parasite can cause symptoms like diarrhea, nausea, stomach cramps, or all three. Because other illnesses can have similar symptoms, a special laboratory test is needed to determine if this contaminant is the cause. Columbus Water Works has sent both treated and source water samples from our system to laboratories set up for this parasite test. The water that goes into your tap has never tested positive for this parasite; however, it may be assumed that this parasite can be found in all surface water.

## What Is UCMR?

In an effort to protect the public from potentially harmful substances, the EPA requires all drinking water utilities to analyze its drinking water every five years for certain compounds. This is called the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR). The compounds selected are from a Chemical Candidate List collected by the EPA. The data collected is used to determine if there are any public health concerns related to these substances. For more information please refer to [EPA.Gov/UCMR](http://EPA.Gov/UCMR).

# How Your Water Measures Up...

## Drinking Water Analysis

Regulated Substance Tested and Detected	MCL	MCLG	Amount Detected	Range of Detection	Dates of Sampling (Mo./Yr.)	Does it meet Standards?	Possible Source of Substance
Fluoride, ppm (a)	4	4	0.8	0.4 - 1.2	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Water additive promoting strong teeth
Nitrate, ppm	10	10	0.5	N/A	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Runoff from fertilizer use
Chlorite, ppm	1	0.8	0.2	0.06 - 0.67	1/14 -12/14	Yes	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Turbidity, NTU (b)	TT = 1 NTU TT = % of samples ≤ 0.30 NTU	N/A 0	0.06 100%	N/A	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Soil runoff
Haloacetic Acids (HAA), ppb (c)	60	N/A	23	17.1 - 27.4	1/14 -12/14	Yes	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM), ppb (c)	80	N/A	40	25 - 55	1/14 -12/14	Yes	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Organic Carbon, ppm	TT	N/A	1.4	1.2 - 1.8	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Naturally present in the environment
Total Coliform Bacteria (percent of monthly samples positive for bacteria)	<5%	0	0.926%	0-0.926%	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Naturally present in the environment

Regulated Substance Tested and Detected	MRDL	MRDLG	Amount Detected	Range of Detection	Dates of Sampling (Mo./Yr.)	Does it meet Standards?	Possible Source of Substance
Chlorine, ppm	4	4	2.1	1.1 - 2.7	1/14 -12/14	Yes	Water additive used to control microbes

Lead and Copper at the Tap (d)	AL	MCLG	Amount Detected	# of Sites Found Above AL	Dates of Sampling (Mo./Yr.)	Does it meet Standards?	Possible Source of Substance
Lead, ppb	15	0	2.5	1* (55 sites Sampled)	1/13 -12/13	Yes	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Copper, ppm	1.3	1.3	0.14	0* (55 sites Sampled)	1/13 -12/13	Yes	Corrosion of household plumbing systems

Note: Detected amounts are annual averages or running annual averages

\* Although 1 site tested above the action level, the standard of 90 percent of test sites being within the regulated limits was met.

Unregulated Substance Tested and Detected*	MCL	MCLG	Amount Detected	Range of Detection	Dates of Sampling (Mo/Yr)	Does it Meet Standards	Possible Sources of Substance
Molybdenum, ppb	None	None	1.9	1.6 - 2.1	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Found naturally in most minerals
Strontium, ppb	None	None	40	28 - 54	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Naturally occurring earth alkaline metal
Vanadium, ppb	None	None	0.36	0.2 - 0.5	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Naturally occurring in 65 different minerals and fossil fuel deposits
Hexavalent Chromium, ppb	None	None	0.056	0.047 - 0.066	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Naturally occurring earth metal in its oxidized state
Total Chromium, ppb	None	None	0.25	0.24 - 0.26	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Naturally occurring earth metal
1,4-dioxane, ppb	None	None	0.16	0.089 - 0.23	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	Man-made solvent
Chlorate, ppb	None	None	99.8	73 - 120	1/14 - 12/14	Standard not established	By-product of chlorine disinfection

\*Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) is required testing by the EPA every 5 years. CWW detected trace amounts on 7 of the 28 substances tested.

## Important Drinking Water Definitions

Term	Definition
AL	<b>Action Level (AL):</b> The concentration of the contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements, which a water system must follow.
MCL	<b>Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):</b> 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	<b>Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):</b> 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	<b>Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL):</b> 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	<b>Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG):</b> The level of 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 contamination.
NA	<b>Not Applicable</b>
NTU	<b>Nephelometric Turbidity Units:</b> Measurement of the clarity (turbidity) of water.
ppm	<b>parts per million:</b> One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).
ppb	<b>parts per billion:</b> One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).
TT	<b>Treatment Technique (TT):</b> A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
≤	less than or equal to
≥	greater than or equal to
(a)	Fluoride is added in treatment to bring the natural level to the EPA optimum of 1 part per million.
(b)	Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indicator of water quality and the effectiveness of our filtration system.
(c)	The level is based on a system-wide 4-quarter running average of several samples, as required by EPA testing protocol.
(d)	Water from the treatment plant does not contain lead or copper. However, under EPA test protocol, water is tested at the tap. Tap tests show that where a customer may have lead-soldered copper pipes, the water is not corrosive. This means the amount of lead or copper absorbed by that water is limited to safe levels. Flushing the line before drinking will ensure your safety.

# 2014 Water Quality Report for Columbus and Fort Benning, GA



Columbus Water Works  
Post Office Box 1600  
Columbus, GA 31902

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#### **Public Meeting Information:**

Columbus Water Works' operations are conducted under the Board of Water Commissioners. Board Members are appointed by the Columbus Consolidated Government City Council. The Board holds regularly scheduled meetings at 1:30 PM on the second Monday of each month.

These meetings are open to the public. Meetings are located at:  
1421 Veterans Parkway, Columbus, Georgia 31901.

#### **Other Information Sources:**

Websites with information about water quality:

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)  
[www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)  
[www.amwa.net](http://www.amwa.net)  
[www.gaepd.org](http://www.gaepd.org)  
[www.cwwga.org](http://www.cwwga.org)



#### **Columbus Customers:**

The Columbus Water Works business office located at 1421 Veterans Parkway, is open weekdays, except for holidays:

**Lobby Hours** 9 AM - 5 PM  
**Drive-Thru Hours** 8 AM - 5 PM

**General Information/ Emergencies (706) 649-3400**

#### **Fort Benning Customers:**

If you have problems with your service, contact:  
Residential: 706-685-3929  
Commercial: 706-545-2232 or 706-545-2518