ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

Reporting Year 2025

Presented By

Howard County
Department of Public Works

PWS ID#: MD0130002

Howard County Drinking Water

A message from the County Executive

Protecting access to clean, safe, and reliable drinking water is a necessity and a critical part of Howard County's vision for a sustainable and resilient future. The 2026 Annual Water Quality Report, covering the 2025 testing period, reflects the high standards our Bureau of Utilities maintains to ensure your water meets and exceeds federal and state safety regulations.

This report provides a transparent look at the source of our water, how it is treated, and the rigorous testing it undergoes to guarantee its quality. We want our residents to enjoy peace of mind each time they turn on the tap, and we remain steadfast in delivering that confidence.

We are incredibly thankful for the dedicated public servants and utility professionals who work around the clock through every season and circumstance to protect our water infrastructure and serve our community with excellence. Their work is the backbone of our public health and daily life.

As we look to the future, Howard County continues investing in sustainable water solutions and resilient infrastructure, partnering regionally to adapt to climate pressures and secure this vital resource for generations to come.

Together, we will continue to build a healthier community - one drop at a time! Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

Please sign up to receive the County Executive's weekly newsletter "The Ball Bulletin" to stay informed about the lastest County news. https://www.howardcountymd.gov/county-executive/county-executive-newsletter

Howard County's Tap water supply meets all State and Federal health standards in 2025

Howard County is pleased to present to you this year's water quality report, as mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). This report is designed to inform you about the quality water and services we deliver to you every day. We want you to understand the efforts our water suppliers make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. Based on the water quality monitoring data collected in 2025, the county's drinking water met all state and federal drinking water health standards. The U.S. EPA and the MDE mandate that all water agencies produce an annual document educating customers about their drinking water quality from the previous year.

INSIDE

Contact

- **Office of The County Executive:** 410-313-2013
- **Public Information:** 410-313-2022
- **Public Works:** 410-313-4400
- **Water-Sewer Billing:** 410-313-2058
- **Bureau of Utilities:** 410-313-4900
- **Water Quality:** 410-313-4997

Websites

Howard County
https://www.howardcountymd.gov

EPA
https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water

Maryland Department of the Environment
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/water_supply/

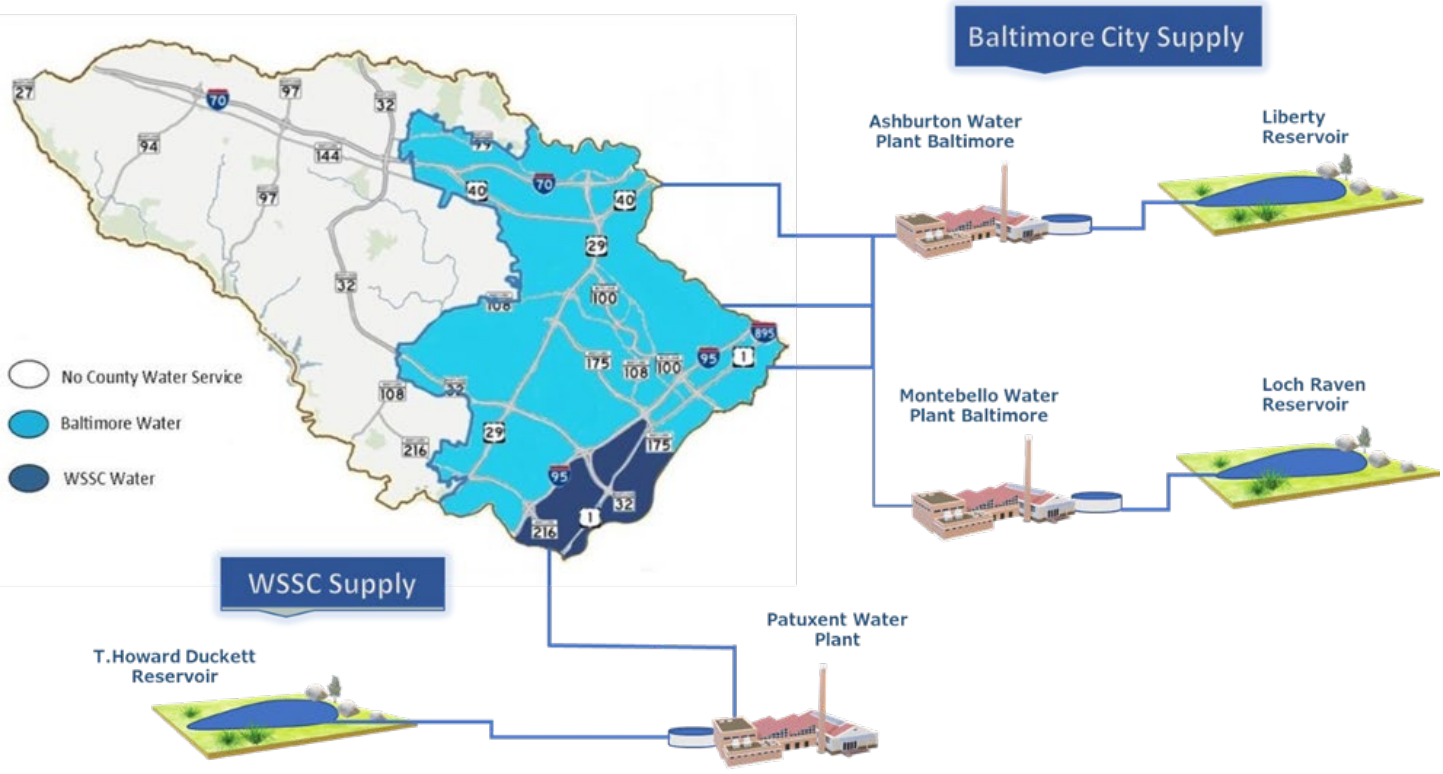
E-Newsletter Sign-Up

Stay informed about water main repairs, sanitary sewer overflows, shared septic interest and more!

https://tinyurl.com/yye8u9av

Where Does My Water Come From?

As a "Consecutive Water System", Howard County purchases water from Baltimore City and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). Howard County residents living east of Interstate 95 and south of Patuxent Range Road receive their water supply from WSSC in Laurel. Residents in all other parts of Howard County who are connected to the public water system receive their water from Baltimore City.



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 contacting the U.S. EPA by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or visiting epa.gov/safewater.

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. Howard County 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 and wish to have your water tested, contact Howard County at (410) 313-2013. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at epa.gov/safewater/lead.

An initial inventory of service line pipe materials located within our service area was required to be submitted to MDE by October 16, 2024. Our initial inventory was submitted to MDE on June 15, 2024, and is available at https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b5d8a29200a944248a162d4229ad7882/.

PFAS Monitoring

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of more than 4,000 human-made chemicals that have been used since the 1940s in a range of products, including stain- and water-resistant fabrics and carpeting, cleaning products, paints, cookware, food packaging, and firefighting foams. These uses have led to PFAS entering our environment, where they have been measured by several states in soil, surface water, groundwater, and seafood. Some PFAS can last a long time in the environment and in the human body and can accumulate in the food chain.

The U.S. EPA announced regulations for six PFAS compounds in drinking water in April 2024. The maximum contaminant level (MCL) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) is 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt). The MCL for perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA) is 10 ppt. PFAS mixtures containing at least two of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS use a Hazard Index of 1.0 (unitless) to determine if the combined and co-occurring levels of these PFAS pose a risk and require action. Public water systems have three years (by 2029) to implement solutions that reduce these PFAS if monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed the MCLs.

The MDE conducted a PFAS monitoring program for community water systems from 2020 to 2022. The results are available on MDE's website at

marylanddepartmentoftheenvironment.shinyapps.io/MDE_PFAS_PublicWaterSystemStudyMap.

Community Participation

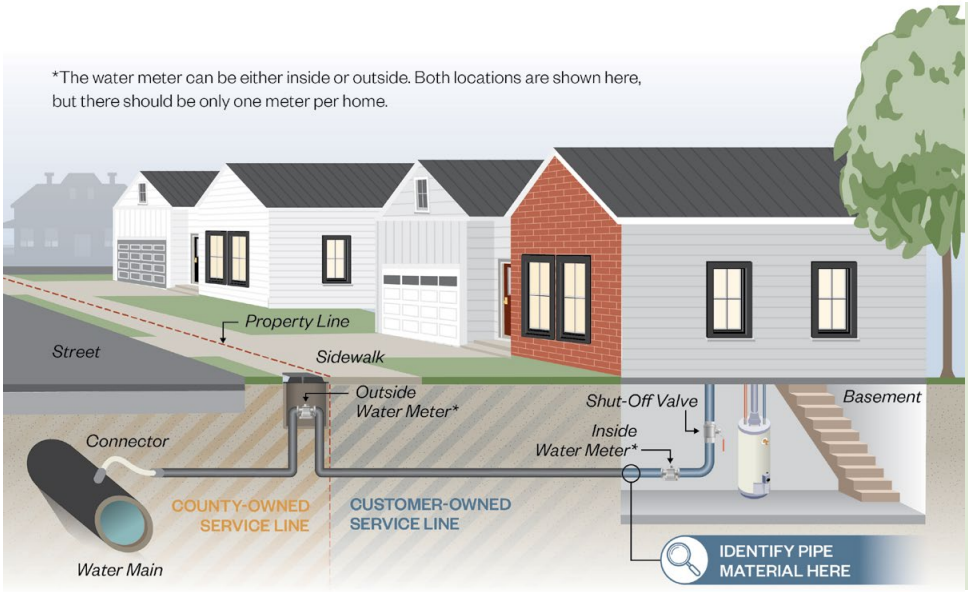
You are invited to participate in our public forum and voice your concerns about your drinking water. The Howard County Council meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City.

Service Line Stewardship Program

The EPA launched the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) in January 2021 to mitigate health risks stemming from lead exposure in drinking water. Impacting all water distribution systems nationwide, the regulations require utilities for the first time to develop a comprehensive service line material inventory, implement new compliance sampling standards, and make the results publicly available. To meet the requirements of the LCRR, Howard County has launched the Service Line Stewardship Program (SLSP).

The Service Line Stewardship Program is a comprehensive approach to comply with the LCRR. The goal is to engage with our customers during every step of the compliance process, providing transparency, trust, and honest answers to your questions. As part of that commitment, we want to first assure our customers that the water provided by Howard County does not contain lead when it leaves the City of Baltimore and WSSC water treatment facilities, which provide our drinking water. The water distributed to our customers consistently meets state and federal regulatory standards. Importantly, the likelihood of finding lead service lines in our water distribution system is low, since Maryland prohibit-ed lead water pipe construction in 1972.

One of the main goals of the Service Line Stewardship Program is to establish a complete service line material inventory. Although Maryland has not used lead as a piping material since 1972, there are still properties listed as having service lines made of an unknown material. We need your help in identifying these “unknowns” by taking a short survey and confirming the absence of lead to help complete our inventory. Only customers with unknown service lines will be asked to take the self-reporting survey and will receive requests from the Service Line Stewardship Program via the mail.



What is a Service Line?

A service line is an underground pipe linking your home to the public water main, supplying water to faucets, bathtubs, showers, and other outlets. Please refer to the picture to help you locate where you can find you service line.

The County recently completed the initial service line material inventory, which can be viewed by clicking here. Customers can search for their home either by zooming in or by entering the address in the upper left.

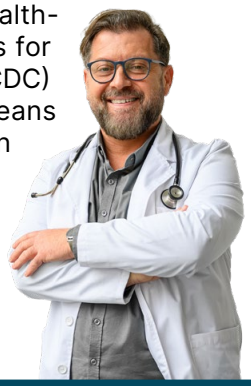
FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the Service Line Stewardship Program, please contact Howard County’s Department of Public Works at 410-313-7577. Employees at our Bureau of Utilities work around the clock to provide top quality water to every tap. We ask that all our customers help us protect our water sources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life and our children’s future.

Important Health Information

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 parts per million (ppm) is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant and detected nitrate levels are above 5 ppm, you should ask advice from your health-care provider.

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 can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health-care providers. 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 or epa.gov/safewater.



Testing for *Cryptosporidium*

Monitoring of our purchased water from Baltimore City indicates the presence of *Cryptosporidium* at the following levels:

Liberty: 0.00 – 0.09 oocyst per liter (oocyst/L)

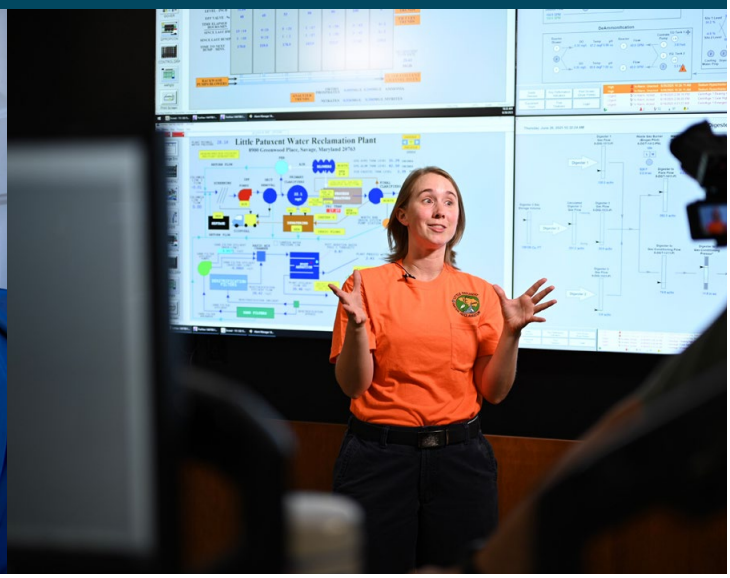
Loch Raven: 0.00 – 0.19 oocyst/L

Susquehanna River: 0.00 – 0.64 oocyst/L

Cryptosporidium is a microbial parasite found in surface water throughout the U.S. Although filtration removes *Cryptosporidium*, the most commonly used filtration methods cannot guarantee 100 percent removal. Current test methods do not allow us to determine if the organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease. Symptoms of infection include nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the disease within a few weeks. However, immunocompromised people are at greater risk of developing life-threatening illness. We encourage immunocompromised individuals to consult their doctor regarding appropriate precautions to take to avoid infection. *Cryptosporidium* must be ingested to cause disease, and it may be spread through means other than drinking water.

Source Water Assessment

MDE has completed a source water assessment of the water supplies that serve Baltimore City and WSSC. A Source Water Assessment Program fact sheet is available on MDE's website at mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/water_supply/source_water_assessment_program. For more information about drinking water contaminants and potential health effects, contact the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.



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.

The percentage of total organic carbon (TOC) removal was measured each month, and the system met all TOC removal requirements set.

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 that 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.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES

				Howard County		Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant)		WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant)		Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants)			
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Alpha Emitters (pCi/L)	2025	15	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	ND	NA	NA	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Antimony (ppb)	2025	6	6	NA	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	No	Discharge from petroleum refineries; Fire retardants; Ceramics; Electronics; Solder
Arsenic (ppb)	2025	10	0	NA	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Runoff from orchards; Runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
Barium (ppm)	2025	2	2	NA	NA	0.0238	0.0199–0.0238	0.04	0.02–0.04	0.0407	0.0231–0.0407	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Beta/Photon Emitters (pCi/L)	2025	50[1]	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.4	ND–4.4	NA	NA	No	Decay of natural and human-made deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	2025	[4]	[4]	0.45	0.01–1.12	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	Water additive used to control microbes
E. coli (positive samples)	2025	TT	0	ND	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	Human and animal fecal waste
Fluoride (ppm)	2025	4	4	NA	NA	0.90	0.50–0.90	0.9	0.5–0.9	1.09	0.07–1.09	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive that promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Haloacetic Acids [HAA5] (ppb)	2025	60	NA	31	ND–32	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2025	10	10	NA	NA	5.81	0.91–5.81	1.4	0.4–1.4	1.57	0.41–1.57	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid [HFPO-DA/GenX] (ppt)	2025	10[2]	10[2]	NA	NA	ND	NA	NA	NA	ND	NA	No	Discharge from manufacturing and industrial chemical facilities, use of certain consumer products, occupational exposures, and certain firefighting activities
Perfluorobutanesulfonic Acid [PFBS] (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.75	NA	2	<1.6-2.0	2.21	NA	No	
Perfluorohexanesulfonic Acid [PFHxS] (ppt)	2025	10[2]	10[2]	NA	NA	ND	NA	1.6	ND-1.6	ND	NA	No	
Perfluorononanoic Acid [PFNA] (ppt)	2025	10[2]	10[2]	NA	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	ND	NA	No	
Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid [PFOS] (ppt)	2025	4[2]	0[2]	NA	NA	3.33	NA	1.8	ND-1.8	1.68	NA	No	
Perfluorooctanoic Acid [PFOA] (ppt)	2025	4[2]	0[2]	NA	NA	2.94	NA	1.8	<1.6-1.8	1.88	NA	No	
Hazard Index (unitless)	2025	1.0	1.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.16	NA	NA	NA	No	
Radium 228 (pCi/L)	2025	5	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.1	0.1–0.2	NA	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Total Coliform Bacteria	2025	TT	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	Naturally present in the environment
Total Trihalomethanes [TTHMs] (ppb)	2025	80[3]	NA	68	23–115	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Turbidity[4] (NTU)	2025	TT	NA	NA	NA	0.12	NA	0.05	NA	0.22	NA	No	Soil runoff

REGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	Howard County AMOUNT DETECTED	Howard County RANGE LOW-HIGH	Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant) AMOUNT DETECTED	Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant) RANGE LOW-HIGH	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) AMOUNT DETECTED	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) RANGE LOW-HIGH	Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants) AMOUNT DETECTED	Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants) RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Turbidity (lowest monthly percent of samples meeting limit)	2025	TT = 95% of samples meet the limit	NA	NA	NA	100	NA	100	NA	100	NA	No	Soil runoff

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 (ppm)	2023	1.3	1.3	0.1	0.001–0.2	0/58	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2023	15	0	4	ND–6.6	0/58	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

SECONDARY SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	SMCL	MCLG	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) AMOUNT DETECTED	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Aluminum (ppb)	2025	200	NA	20	10–40	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Residual from some surface water treatment processes
Chloride (ppm)	2025	250	NA	43	35–55	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Color (units)	2025	15	NA	ND	NA	No	Naturally occurring organic materials
Copper (ppm)	2025	1.0	NA	0.01	0.01–0.02	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Iron (ppb)	2025	300	NA	ND	NA	No	Leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes
Manganese (ppb)	2025	50	NA	2	3–8	No	Leaching from natural deposits
Odor (TON)	2025	3	NA	1.0	0.1–2.3	No	Naturally occurring organic materials
pH (units)	2025	6.5–8.5	NA	7.5	7.1–7.9	No	Naturally occurring
Sulfate (ppm)	2025	250	NA	5.9	4.4–7.1	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; Industrial wastes

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant) AMOUNT DETECTED	Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant) RANGE LOW-HIGH	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) AMOUNT DETECTED	WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant) RANGE LOW-HIGH	Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants) AMOUNT DETECTED	Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants) RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
2-Methylisoborneol (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	2.2	2.0–9.2	NA	NA	NA
Alkalinity (ppm)	2025	NA	NA	38	25–48	NA	NA	NA
Calcium (ppm)	2025	NA	NA	19	15–25	NA	NA	NA
Geosmin (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	2.9	2.0–6.5	NA	NA	NA
Hardness, Total [as CaCO3] (ppm)	2025	NA	NA	70	58–86	NA	NA	NA
Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid [HFPO-DA/GenX] (ppt)	2025	ND	NA	NA	NA	ND	NA	NA
Nickel (ppb)	2025	NA	NA	ND	NA	NA	NA	Naturally occurring
Perfluorohexanoic Acid [PFHxA] (ppt)	2025	2.9	NA	1.9	1.7 - 2.2	2.08	NA	NA
Perfluorobutanoic Acid [PFBA] (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	2.5	<1.7 - 3.3	NA	NA	NA
Perfluoropentanoic Acid [PFPeA] (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	2.3	2.0 - 2.8	NA	NA	NA

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES

		Baltimore City Supply (Ashburton Plant)		WSSC Supply (Patuxent Water Filtration Plant)		Baltimore City Supply (Montebello Plants)		
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Perfluoroheptanoic Acid [PFHpA] (ppt)	2025	NA	NA	0.6	ND - 1.7	NA	NA	NA
Residual Chlorine (ppm)	2025	NA	NA	1.3	0.4–2.7	NA	NA	NA
Sodium (ppm)	2025	NA	NA	16	13–22	NA	NA	NA
Specific Conductance (µS/cm)	2025	NA	NA	241	198–345	NA	NA	NA
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	2025	NA	NA	17	4–27	NA	NA	NA
Tritium (pCi/L)	2025	NA	NA	ND	NA	NA	NA	NA

[1] The MCL for beta particles is 4 millirems per year. The U.S. EPA considers 50 pCi/L to be the level of concern for beta particles.
[2] The PFAS Maximum Contaminant Levels established under EPA's 2024 National Primary Drinking Water Regulation are not federally enforceable until 2029.
[3] Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.
[4] Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is monitored because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the filtration system.

Definitions

µS/cm (microsiemens per centimeter): A unit expressing the amount of electrical conductivity of a solution.

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.

NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units): Measurement of the clarity, or turbidity, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

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).

SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level): These standards are developed to protect aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

TON (Threshold Odor Number): A measure of odor in water.

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

Violation and Waiver Information

Waivers - MDE has granted the City of Baltimore monitoring waivers for the following compounds: 2,3,7,8-TCDD (Dioxin), Endothall, Diquat, Glyphosphate, Asbestos and Cyanide.

Violation - Howard County had no violations in 2025.

Message from the Public Works Director

To Our Valued Customer,

On behalf of the Howard County Department of Public Works' (DPW) Bureau of Utilities and its exceptionally skilled and dedicated staff, we are pleased to issue the 2026 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR is a federally mandated deliverable that all community water systems throughout the country are required to publish for their customers. Its purpose is to "improve public health protection by providing educational material to allow consumers to make educated decisions regarding any potential health risks pertaining to the quality, treatment, and management of their drinking water supply."

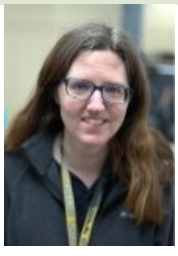
Howard County purchases drinking water wholesale from two providers – Baltimore City and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). Both Baltimore City and WSSC have excellent source water that they treat to meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standards, before distributing to Howard County.

Although both Baltimore City and WSSC have their own processes to ensure that the drinking water they supply to Howard County meets or exceeds all drinking water standards, DPW's Bureau of Utilities maintains its own system of checks to monitor drinking water quality as it travels throughout our network. This includes regular sampling from designated sampling locations and laboratory analyses to verify the characteristics of the samples. This added layer of quality assurance is necessary to confirm that every private water line connected to our system is reliably delivering high quality drinking water to customers.

Water is a valuable commodity that requires reliable assets to deliver it to consumers. DPW must not only guard against potential impairments to water quality but also ensure that the assets used to deliver water (i.e. our pipes, pumps, tanks, etc.) are intact and reliable for decades to come. This requires on-going investment in asset performance and reliability, with an emphasis on monitoring assets as they age and making the necessary early interventions, before they fail.

We hope this CCR is informative and confirms the commitment of DPW to enhancing our customers' quality of life. If you have any questions or require more information, please contact the Bureau of Utilities team at 410-313-4900 or visit our website: https://www.howardcountymd.gov/public-works/bureau-utilities

Yosef Kebede, P.E., Director
Department of Public Works
Howard County Government






Howard County
Department of Public Works

OUR MISSION

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR CUSTOMERS BY PROVIDING BEST-IN-CLASS ESSENTIAL SERVICES

OUR VISION

TO BE A NATIONAL MODEL OF PUBLIC WORKS EXCELLENCE

HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF UTILITIES
8250 OLD MONTGOMERY ROAD
COLUMBIA, MD 21045

This report contains important information about your drinking water. For language assistance or questions about this report, contact the Howard County Bureau of Utilities at **410-313-4900.**