

Tewksbury Water Department

2021 Consumer Confidence Report

Water System ID# 3295000

This report details information such as water quality, where your water comes from and how it is processed. More information on your water system can be found at:

Water & Sewer Billing

978-640-4350

(please have your bill or account number ready)

Water Treatment Plant

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This report is mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MaDEP). Much of this report consists of required language which may or may not be relevant to the Tewksbury Water System. Please feel free to contact the Treatment Plant for further clarification. If English is not your first language please have this report translated. *Si Ingles no es su primer idioma, por favor traduzca el informe.*

WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?

The Merrimack River covers over 4,672 square miles between the States of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, starting at Weirs Beach, Lake Winnepesaukee. Because of the large recharge area, the Merrimack River has a very large capacity to supply water even during extended droughts. Over the last 30+ years the river has undergone a tremendous change as far as water quality is concerned. Upstream wastewater plants installed in the late 1980's and elimination of hidden outfalls has contributed to the "B" classification of the river water.



Our intake station is directly alongside the river and is designed to survive flooding up to six feet above the embankments. The building is actually built as a solid piece of concrete and goes two stories below the ground. Intake screens located on the bottom of the river draw water in while 1/8" slots prevent any debris from entering the waterworks.

HOW IS OUR WATER TREATED?

The water plant is considered a “conventional” treatment facility. The water is treated in multiple stages called unit processes. The idea is that any one or more unit process can fail and still produce potable drinking water. The Plant employees several licensed treatment operators, a chemist, mechanic, and assistant Operators-in-training to ensure we are always adequately staffed with appropriate redundancy. The plant is staffed and operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Screening: As mentioned prior, 1/8” slotted screens are used to prevent any damaging debris from entering the treatment stream. The screens are made of stainless steel and are inspected and cleaned every few years using construction and maintenance divers. Compressed air is used to keep the screens cleared of any settling debris. Yes, they are fish friendly and approved by Fish and Wildlife to ensure that fish will not be trapped by the screens.

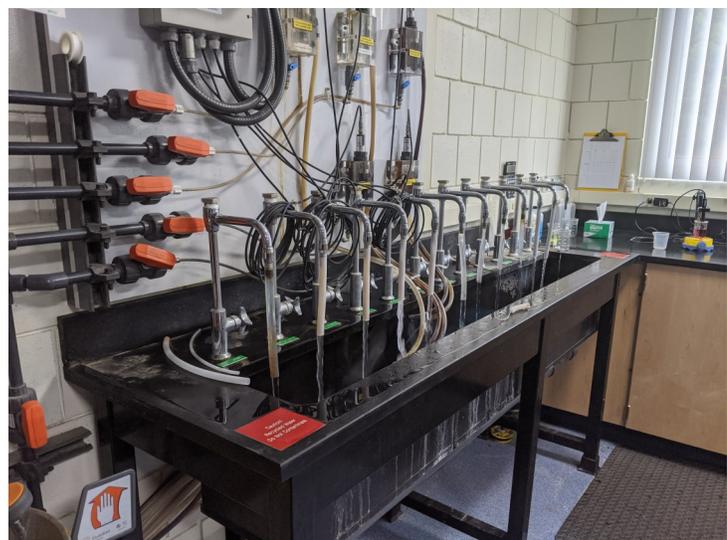
Disinfection: Chlorine Dioxide and Bleach are used to disinfect the water and to help remove color and other organic components. Chlorine Dioxide by itself achieves a near 100% kill of all bacteria, but the water is then disinfected two more times using bleach. Aeration blowers help to reduce chlorine byproducts that can form in the treated water.

Coagulation: Coagulation is a process whereby ALUM is added to the water to produce a sticky material referred to as “floc”. Sticky floc surrounds particles suspended in the water and causes them to easily settle out via the sedimentation process. This produces clarified water that is then filtered in the next unit process. Good settling and consistent chemical addition is the key to good treatment. This has been augmented by an equalizing tank which will allow the process to run in a very consistent flow rate. This serves to improve chemical addition and eliminates flow surges which can “fluff” the floc particles.

Filtration: Clarified water is fed through four dual media filters. These filters have a top layer of granulated activated carbon (GAC) and a second layer of fine filter sand. The GAC removes any remaining particles and adsorbs any remaining organic compounds including taste and odor contaminants. The sand acts as a secondary barrier to make sure no microscopic particles can penetrate the filter. As a result, Tewksbury water is typically crystal clear. All filters are cleaned once a day by backwashing, and the GAC is replaced every two years, well before the activation is exhausted.

Final Treatment: The final treatment consists of adding Sodium Hydroxide to adjust the pH of the water, a final dose of Bleach, Fluoride for tooth decay prevention and Zinc Ortho Phosphate to prevent pipe corrosion and reduce any lead or copper from dissolving into the water.

Aeration: Aeration as mentioned above. Two 125 HP blowers blow air into diffusion tubes located at the bottom of the contact chamber. These bubbles will strip any volatile organic compound that may be found in the water. This air stripping process is targeted mainly towards a group of compounds known as Trihalomethanes (THM’s). THM’s are created when chlorine is added to the water for disinfection. The aeration system is used to remove THM’s to lower their concentration to well below acceptable limits.



Analytical Results of Testing for 2021

Inorganic Analysis

Contaminant	Highest Level	Range Detected	Avg. Detected	MCL / MRDL	MCLG / MRDLG	Violation	NOTES
Perchlorate (PPB)	0.15	0.15	0.15	2.0	0	N	Oxygen additive for solid fuel rockets & missiles; Industrial waste.
Fluoride (PPM)	0.78	NA	0.63	4.0	4.0	N	Water additive that promotes strong teeth.
Sodium (PPM)	49	NA	49	NA	NA	N	Natural sources; runoff from salt used on roadways; by-product of treatment process.
Nitrate (PPM)	0.414	NA	0.414	10	10	N	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks; erosion of natural deposits.
Sulfates (PPM)	23.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	Soil runoff and detergents; by-product from treatment process.
Chlorite (PPM)	0.238	0.024-0.238	0.09	1	NA	N	Disinfection by-product.

- Perchlorate is found in nature from various sources such as industrial waste, fireworks, improperly disposed of solid rocket fuel, and is also found in old bleach. Perchlorate is very stable and hard to remove from water. The value above is barely above the detection limit of the method (0.1 PPB). Massachusetts has the lowest MCL in the nation of 2 PPB.
- Fluoride is added to the water to prevent cavities. Fluoride is very well controlled and the target dosage recently was reduced to 0.80 mg/L to account for all Fluoride sources such as toothpaste and Fluoride rinses.
- Sodium comes from naturally occurring sources and from road-salt runoff. Sodium Hydroxide is also used in the plant to adjust pH and add alkalinity for the coagulation process. 20 mg/L (5 mg/8 oz.) is considered "low-sodium" by the FDA <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/drinkingwater/dws/ccl/sodium.cfm>.
- Nitrate is a naturally occurring compound which is also produced when our bleach converts ammonia to nitrates in our treatment process. Ammonia is highest in the winter when the river is frozen and is the probable cause for "strong chlorine" smell complaints.
- Sulfates are mostly added to the water from using Aluminum Sulfate (ALUM). There is no MCL for sulfate and our concentrations are very low.
- Chlorite is produced when Chlorine Dioxide (disinfectant similar to bleach) reacts with the raw water. Most of the chlorite is removed by the carbon filters but some does pass through. During the warmer months chlorite is normally very low to none detected.

Bacterial Analysis

Contaminant	Highest Level	Range De- tected	Avg. De- tected	MCL / MRDL	MCLG / MRDLG	Viola- tion	Possible Source
Total Coliform	0.0%	N.A	N/A	<5%	0	N	Naturally present in the environment.

On a weekly basis thirteen (13) sites are sampled and tested for bacteria and free chlorine. Free chlorine is always detected at all sample sites, which indicates our water is very stable as the residual chlorine gives additional protection against harmful bacteria.

Organic Analysis

Contaminant	Highest Level	Range De- tected	Avg. De- tected	MCL / MRDL	MCLG / MRDLG	Viola- tion	Possible Source
TTHM (PPB)	130	54-130	88.3	80	NA	Y	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
HAA5 (PPB)	32	3.5-32	19.4	60	NA	N	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
VOC (PPB)	None De- tected	NA	NA				Discharges from industrial chemical facilities.

- Total TriHaloMethanes (TTHM) are produced when bleach is added to water. Four sites are monitored on a quarterly basis and our treatment process is adjusted to minimize the production of TTHMs. Violations are determined on a running annual average.
- Halo Acetic Acids (HAA) are organic compounds produced when bleach is added to water. They are sampled at the same time as TTHMs and are usually very low.
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) are 65 chemical compounds which are tested for each quarter. They range from simple solvents used in industry to other compounds such as Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) and even Freon. Acetone limits have not been set.

Physical Analysis

Contaminant	Highest Level	Range De- tected	Avg. De- tected	MCL / MRDL	MCLG / MRDLG	Viola- tion	Possible Source
Turbidity	0.133	0.017-0.133	0.042	0.3	<5%	N	Soil runoff.

- Turbidity is a measure of how much suspended particulate is in the water. Water with high turbidity indicates a problem with the treatment process and can interfere with the free chlorine doing its job of disinfection. Typically the water that is produced at the plant is very low in turbidity (0.02-0.04) which is measured in Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU). As a comparison, distilled water has a turbidity of just below 0.02 NTU.
- Asbestos Cement (AC) pipe was used in the late 1940s as an alternative to cast iron pipe. Although it is reinforced by asbestos fibers, the interior of the pipe is cement lined and no fibers can reach the water.

Lead and Copper Monitoring Program (2020)

Contaminant	90th Percentile	# of sites exceeded	# of Sites Sampled	Action Level	MCLG	Violation	Possible Source
Lead (PPM)	0.002	0	30	0.015	0	N	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits.
Copper (PPM)	0.073	0	30	1.3	0	N	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits.

Next testing will take place Summer 2023

Lead and Copper Program History

Originally over 60 homes were sampled for Lead and Copper analysis. Homes were selected to make sure they contained lead solder and therefore represented “worst case scenario” of pipe corrosion. Special sample bottles are delivered to the homes and the target faucet could not be touched for 24 hours. The first liter of water was sampled and then sent to a certified lab for analysis. Tewksbury has passed all of the Lead and Copper testing cycles since the program started. As a result of our good results we are permitted for reduced monitoring of only 30 homes. We are required to test for Lead & Copper every three years, and so will again in the summer of 2023.

Corrosion Control Method:

Zinc Ortho Phosphate is added to the water to reduce corrosion. If new pipes are added or any bare metals surfaces are exposed the zinc “passivates” the metal surface rendering it inactive. The phosphate creates a very thin hard coating on the surface of the pipe interior. This coating creates an insulating barrier so the water technically does not touch the pipe walls. This process helps to keep your porcelain clean of any green discoloration and extends the lifetime of your water pipes. The zinc concentration is about 0.1 mg/L and the phosphate concentration runs an average of 0.5 mg/L. The corrosion control effect of this treatment chemical is optimum at a pH of about 7.5 which is also our target pH for finished water. New copper or copper that is repaired will require time for the metal surfaces to become “passivated”. As a result it is not unusual that residents will observe pink discoloration on porcelain for a few weeks. This is a copper compound and is only temporary until the new copper is coated. As always, we thank our volunteer Lead and Copper homes for helping us with this important program.

Helpful Hint:

Flush out your hot water tank once or twice a year to remove sediment. This will keep your hot water cleaner and extend your hot water tank life.

PFAS Analysis

WHAT ARE PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many other chemicals. PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including in the United States since the 1940s. These chemicals are very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects.

MA DEP has now implemented a sampling program for PFAS, and Tewksbury regularly samples our finish drinking water for PFAS. To date, our finish drinking water is well below the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ng/L. For more information, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

Contaminant	Highest Level	MMCL	Violation	Possible Source
PFAS	7.06 ng/L	20 ng/L	N	Non-stick products, water-resistant products, and stain resistant products. Found in different types of coating and fire fighting foams used by military and local fire departments.



Tewksbury now performs quarterly PFAS sampling of our finish drinking water. The Plant chemist collects the water sample, and the System's certified lab consultant, Alpha Analytical, performs the analysis. The town also has a consultant on contract that regularly reviews our PFAS data to ensure our water is always safe. Next year's report will contain the quarterly data for 2021. The treatment plant happens to use granular activated carbon, one of the most highly recommended processes to remove PFAS in drinking water.

Definitions and Terminology Used in this Report

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) – the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) – the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) - The highest level of a disinfectant (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) 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 (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLG's do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

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

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

PPB – Parts per billion or micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$).

PPM – Parts per million or milligrams per liter (mg/L).

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. It 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 be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm-water 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 agricultural, urban storm-water 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 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, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations that 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 that must provide the same protection for public health. All 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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800.426.4791.

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 some infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on lowering the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800.426.4791.

Lead: Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested and flush your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using tap water. Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800.426.4791.

THM: Some people who drink water containing Trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years' experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have increased risk of getting cancer.

Turbidity: Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches.

Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)

Trihalomethanes (THMs) are the result of a reaction between the chlorine used for disinfecting tap water and natural organic matter in the water. At elevated levels, THMs have been associated with negative health effects such as cancer and adverse reproductive outcomes.

Tewksbury exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) in 2021. TTHMs are sampled quarterly at several locations throughout the system. Compliance is determined by calculating a rolling annual average. All Customers were notified by mail when these violations occurred, as well as publication in the Town Crier and posting on Town social media.

As part of the response to getting our TTHMs back in compliance, the town worked with AECOM, a consultant that has expertise in drinking water treatment. A number of improvements were made, including more efficient chlorine dosing, more frequent sampling, filter basin cleaning, and increased usage of our aeration blowers which reduce organic compounds in the water.



The System is now in full compliance for TTHMs in 2022. Should another violation occur, you will be notified appropriately.

How can business owners help keep our stormwater clean?

- ✓ Keep your dumpster area clean and your dumpster's lid closed. Never fill it with liquid waste or hose it out.



- ✓ Clean mats, filters and garbage cans in a mop sink, wash rack or floor drain connected to the sewer through a grease trap. Never wash them in a parking lot, sidewalk or street.
- ✓ Use dry methods for spill cleanup. Never hose down spills.
- ✓ Recycle grease and oil. Do not pour it into sinks, floor drains, catchbasins or onto a parking lot.
- ✓ Always keep waste liquid bins covered and contained.
- ✓ Recycle solvents, used filters, anti-freeze, batteries, lubricants and metal filings.
- ✓ Use drip pans underneath vehicles to capture fluids. Use absorbent cleaning agents instead of water to clean work areas.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Construction Sites

- ✓ Do not store or stockpile materials near a storm drain, catchbasins, wetlands or streams
- ✓ Schedule excavation, grading, and paving operations for dry weather periods
- ✓ Maintain and install silt sacks in catchbasins, hay bales and silt fences as needed



- ✓ Protect stockpiles by storing under a roof, impermeable tarp, or plastic sheeting
- ✓ Prevent erosion by implementing soil stabilization practices such as mulching and temporary seeding
- ✓ Never pump water directly into the town's graded catchbasins, wetlands, stream and rivers



Recycling Locations

Batteries
DPW Building
999 Whipple Rd
Tewksbury, MA
01876

Motor Oils
M & S Service, Inc.
1875 Main St
Tewksbury, MA
01876



This brochure is designed and distributed by:
Town of Tewksbury, MA
Department of Public Works
Engineering Division

ALL ABOUT STORMWATER

Town of Tewksbury, MA
www.tewksbury-ma.gov/stormwater

Take One

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is any runoff from rain or snow melt that drains into the Town's drainage systems and ultimately ends up in groundwater, ponds, streams and/or wetland resource areas.

What is the Stormwater Management Program?

The Town of Tewksbury's Department of Public Works manages the Stormwater Management Program and is continuously working on fulfilling the requirements of the EPA's NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) MS4 Stormwater Permit Regulations. The EPA's NPDES Stormwater Permit Regulations is federally mandated for all municipalities to eliminate all pollutants to the waters within their jurisdictions. The Town of Tewksbury's Stormwater Management Program consists of Public Education, Illicit Discharge Detection, System Mapping, Water Quality Testing, Construction Site Runoff Control, and Good House Keeping Practices.

Why Does Stormwater Matter?

As rain or snow melt flows over paved services it carries with it any pollutants such as oils, fertilizer, sand, and trash. The pollutants will eventually enter groundwater, ponds, streams and/or wetland resource areas and will contaminate drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat.

How can residents help keep our stormwater clean?

- ✓ Do not dump household waste such as paint, cleaning products, motor oils, antifreeze, pet waste or any other hazardous material into catch basins, streams, ponds and wetland areas
- ✓ Minimize the use of fertilizers near grated catch basins, streams, ponds and wetland areas
- ✓ Maintain your home's septic tank and leaching field by regularly pumping and repairing when necessary
- ✓ Whenever possible use environmentally friendly, biodegradable products when cleaning outside
- ✓ Do not drain chlorinated swimming pools into grated catch basins or onto the street
- ✓ If you must wash your car at home, wash it on the lawn to encourage infiltration and use low-phosphate detergents
- ✓ Always dispose of pet waste in the trash
- ✓ Minimize salt use on walkways and driveways near streams, ponds and/or wetland areas
- ✓ Make sure your vehicle or yard equipment is not leaking any oils or fluids
- ✓ Always Remember: **Only Rain in the Drain**

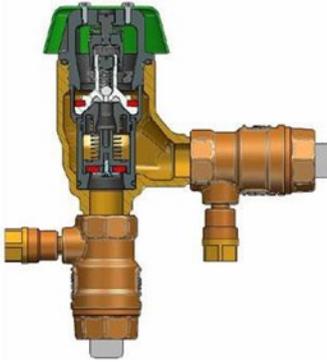


For More Information Please Visit:
www.tewksbury-ma.gov/stormwater

Tewksbury Cross Connection Program

What is a Cross Connection?

A “cross connection” occurs when the potable drinking water system is physically connected to a possible source of contamination. A connection to a private well, an industrial process containing harmful chemicals, a fire water storage tank, or even a hose left in a bucket of insecticide are all cross connections. If a sudden drop in pressure in the water main were to occur—if for example while fighting a fire or a broken water main, back siphoning could occur and draw harmful chemicals into the water distribution system.



Cross section of a Pressure Vacuum Breaker (PVB)

Pressure Vacuum Breaker: this device is required on lawn irrigation systems to prevent pollution, fertilizers and insecticides from being pulled from your lawn and back into your house. Water flows out from the bottom section and the water pressure forces the spring loaded diaphragm at the top closed, allowing water to reach your sprinkler heads under pressure. If the water flow reverses, then the device allows air to enter from the top and “breaks” the vacuum. That’s why it’s called a Pressure Vacuum Breaker, or PVB. This device is so sensitive it can detect and instantly “break” a vacuum of as little as 1 PSI. Testing ensures that your device is working correctly.

Double Check Valve Assembly: a simple backflow device more commonly used in fire sprinkler systems. If one check valve is good then two must be better. Some of these devices, when installed in large buildings, can be several feet long and weigh hundreds of pounds. But no matter how large, they all must have the same sensitivity to protect the water supply from backflows.

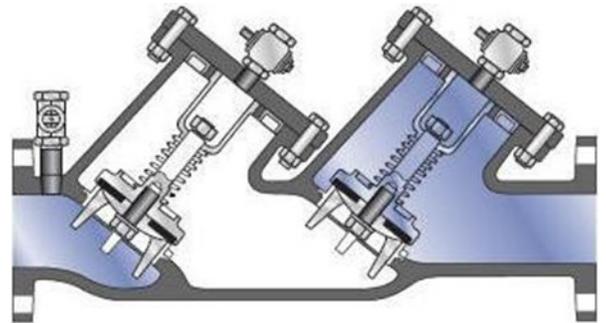


Diagram of a Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA)

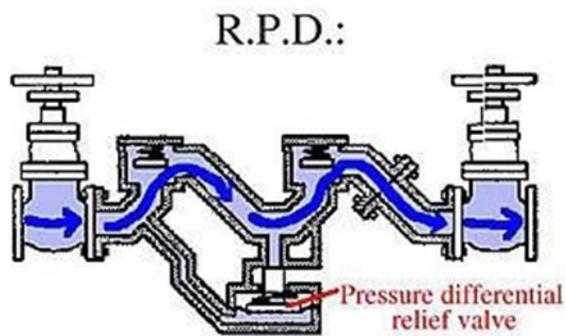


Diagram of a Reduced Pressure Device (RPD)

Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ or RPD): a highly sensitive and efficient backflow protector designed to protect a water system or facility from what is referred to as high hazards. RPZs have two (2) check valves and one differential relief valve in between them. When a backflow occurs, the relief valve opens to allow air in to “break” the vacuum created. This device will continue to work even if one or both check valves are compromised.

Total Containment Policy: Tewksbury uses a Total Containment Policy which requires all Commercial, Industrial, Municipal and Institutional properties to install an RPZ at the meter.

What is the Owner’s Responsibility?

Owners of any industrial, commercial, agricultural, municipal and/or private residence are required to eliminate any cross connections. If the cross connection cannot be eliminated, then a backflow device may be required. Not sure? Please email rnichols@tewksbury-ma.gov.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
Monitoring Requirements Not Met for Tewksbury Water Department

Our water system violated several drinking water standards over the past year. Even though these were not emergencies, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did to correct these situations.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. During 2021, we missed an initial confirmatory sample for PFAS monitoring.

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do at this time.

The table below lists the contaminant we did not properly test for during the last year, how often we are supposed to sample for PFAS, and how many samples we are supposed to take, how many samples we took, when samples should have been taken, and the date on which follow-up samples were (or will be) taken.

Contaminant	Required sampling frequency	Number of samples taken	When all samples should have been taken	When samples were or will be taken
PFAS ¹	Quarterly (plus 1 initial confirmatory sample)	3	2nd Quarter 2021	Quarterly 2022

What happened? What is being done?

The System missed performing an initial confirmatory sample for PFAS in 2021. At no time did any of our regular samples detect a violation of the PFAS maximum contaminant level. All testing to date has shown Tewksbury water to be in compliance with PFAS regulations. PFAS are now sampled for regularly (quarterly). If the System ever is in violation, you will be notified.

For more information, please contact Scott Brinch at 978-640-4440.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by Tewksbury Water Department.

PWS ID#: 3295000

Date distributed: June 25, 2022

¹Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many other chemicals. PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including in the United States since the 1940s. These chemicals are very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects.