



**2021 WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR THE  
SHARPSBURG WATER SYSTEM  
PWSID # 0210017**

**Is my water safe?**

Last year, as in years past, your tap water met all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state drinking water health standards. The Washington County Department of Water Quality vigilantly safeguards its water supplies and once again we are proud to report that our system has never violated a maximum contaminant level or any other water quality standard on this system.

**Do I need to take special precautions?**

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/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on proper means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

**Where does my water come from?**

The water supply for the Town of Sharpsburg Water System comes from the Potomac River, a surface water source. The water is processed through the Sharpsburg Water Treatment Plant. The water plant provides filtration, chlorination, pH adjustment and fluoridation of the water prior to entering the distribution system.

**Source water assessment and its availability**

The Maryland Department of the Environment developed, and the EPA approved its plan for the development of Source Water Assessments. MDE completed the final assessment in July 2002. For more information on this report, contact the Washington County Department of Water Quality at (240) 313-2600.

**Why are there contaminants in my drinking water?**

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 USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

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 can dissolve naturally occurring minerals and radioactive materials, and pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity.

Possible contaminants consist of:

**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 may be naturally occurring or 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 may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff and septic systems

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

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, USEPA prescribes regulations that limit the number 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.

### **How can I get involved?**

For more information on getting involved, please contact Washington County Department of Water Quality at (240) 313-2600.

### **Water Quality Data Table**

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the number of contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The table below lists all the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the calendar year of this report.

Although many more contaminants were evaluated, only those substances listed below were found in your water. All sources of drinking water have some naturally occurring contaminants. At low levels, these substances are generally not harmful in our drinking water. Removing all contaminants would be extremely expensive, and in most cases, would not supply increased protection of public health.

A few naturally occurring minerals may improve the taste of drinking water and have nutritional value at low levels. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done in the calendar year of the report. The EPA or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not vary significantly from year to year, or the system is not considered vulnerable to this type of contamination. As such, some of our data, though representative, may be more than one year old. In this table you will find terms and abbreviations that might not be familiar to you. To help you better understand these terms, we have supplied the definitions below the table.

<u>Contaminants</u>	<u>MCLG</u> or	<u>MCL</u> , <u>TT</u> , or	<u>Your</u>	<u>Range</u>		<u>Sample</u>	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Typical Source</u>
	<u>MRDLG</u>	<u>MRDL</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Date</u>		

**Disinfectants & Disinfectant By-Products**

*(There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants) Not all sample results may have been used for calculating the Highest Level Detected because some results may be part of an evaluation to determine where compliance sampling should occur in the future*

Chlorine (ppm)	4	4	1.3	1	1.3	2021	No	Water additive used to control microbes
TTHM's [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	No goal for the total	80	44	26.8	61.0	2021	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	No goal for the total	60	27.0	14.2	43.2	2021	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection

**Inorganic Contaminants**

Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen] (ppm)	10	10	1	0.79	0.79	2021	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.7	0.66	0.8	2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories

**Turbidity**

	<u>Limit (Treatment Technique)</u>	<u>Level Detected</u>	<u>Sample Date</u>	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Likely Source of Contamination</u>
Highest Single Measurement	1 NTU	0.64 NTU	2021	No	Soil runoff
Lowest Monthly % Meeting Limit	0.3 NTU	100%	2020	No	Soil runoff

*Turbidity is a measurement of the cloudiness of the water caused by suspended particles. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality and the effectiveness of our filtration.*

**Inorganic**

<u>Contaminants</u>	<u>MCLG</u>	<u>AL</u>	<u>Your</u>	<u>Sample</u>	<u># Samples</u>	<u>Exceeded</u>	<u>Typical Source</u>
			<u>Water</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Exceeding AL</u>	<u>AL</u>	
Copper – action level at consumer taps (ppm)	1.3	1.3	0.0695	2020	0	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives

**Cryptosporidium**

<u>Contaminant</u>	<u>Highest Single Measurement</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Sample Date</u>	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Source</u>
Cryptosporidium (Oo)cyst/L	0.18	0.00 – 0.18	2020	No, raw source water monitoring	Human and Animal Fecal Waste

<b>Radioactive Contaminants</b>							
<b>Contaminant</b>	<b>MCLG</b>	<b>MCL</b>	<b>Highest Level Detected</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Violation</b>	<b>Source</b>
Combined Radium 226/228 pCi/L	0	5	0.4	0.4-0.4	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits

Not all sample results may have been used for calculating the highest level detected because some results may be part of an evaluation to determine where compliance sampling should occur in the future.

### **Important Terms**

<b>Unit / Term Descriptions</b>	
<b>Unit / Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>ppm</b>	ppm: parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L) or one ounce in 7,350 gallons of water
<b>ppb</b>	ppb: parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L) or one ounce in 7,350,000 gallons of water
<b>pCi/L</b>	pCi/L: picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)
<b>NA</b>	NA: Not applicable
<b>ND</b>	ND: Not detected
<b>NR</b>	NR: Monitoring not required but recommended
<b>MCLG</b>	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
<b>MCL</b>	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
<b>AVG</b>	Regulatory compliance with some MCL's is based on running average of monthly samples
<b>TT</b>	TT: Treatment Technique: A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water
<b>AL</b>	AL: Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow
<b>Variances and Exemptions</b>	Variances and Exemptions: State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions
<b>MRDLG</b>	MRDLG: Maximum residual disinfection 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
<b>MRDL</b>	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
<b>MNR</b>	MNR: Monitored Not Regulated
<b>MPL</b>	MPL: State Assigned Maximum Permissible Level

### **Total Organic Carbon**

The percentage of Total Organic Carbon (TOC) removal was measured each month and the system met all TOC removal requirements set.

## **Additional Information for Lead**

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Washington County, MD 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 Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

## **Additional Information for Cryptosporidium**

Cryptosporidium is a microbial pathogen found in surface water throughout the U.S. The treatment for Cryptosporidium is filtration, but the most commonly used filtration does not guarantee 100% removal. Test methods do not differentiate between dead organisms or those that can cause the disease cryptosporidiosis, an abdominal infection. Symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the illness in a few weeks. The immune-compromised, infants and small children, and the elderly are at greater risk of developing more severe symptoms. Cryptosporidium must be ingested to cause illness and may be spread by other means than drinking water.

## **Results of voluntary monitoring**

Sharpsburg Water System participated in sampling for PFAs in 2020. PFAs – per and polyfluoroalkyl substances – refers to a large group of more than 4,000 human-made chemicals that have been used since the 1940’s in a range of products, including stain- and water-resistant fabrics and carpeting, cleaning products, paints, cookware, food packaging and fire-fighting foams. These uses of PFAs 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. Currently, there are no federal regulations (i.e., Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs)) for PFAs in drinking water. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a Health Advisory Level (HAL) of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for the sum of PFOA and PFOS concentrations in drinking water. While not enforceable, the limit allows drinking water customers, even the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from lifetime exposure. Beginning in 2020, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) initiated a PFAs monitoring program. The combined PFOA and PFOS concentration from samples taken from our water system was 1.41 ppt, or well below the HAL. The MDE anticipates the EPA will set MCLs in the near future.

The Washington County Department of Water Quality conducts routine testing of your water system that is not included in the Water Quality Data Table. MDE has also completed testing that is not included in the Water Quality Data Table. A list of these parameters and their results are in the Table of Results of Customer Interest below.

## **Voluntary Monitoring**

PARAMETER	LEVEL/RANGE DETECTED	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT
pH	7.1 – 7.9	Standard Unit

**For more information on the  
Sharpsburg Water System contact  
Washington County Department of  
Water Quality  
at (240) 313-2600**