All About Your Drinking Water and How We Keep it Safe

Sources of drinking water (both tap 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 human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses, parasites, and bacteria that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can occur naturally or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from various 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. They can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can occur naturally or result from oil and gas production and mining activities.

Multiple agencies are involved to ensure your tap water is safe to drink:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates drinking water, sets its quality standards, establishes testing methods and monitoring requirements for water utilities, sets maximum water contaminant levels, and requires utilities to notify the public whenever a violation occurs.
- Washington Department of Health and the EPA prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems.
- The Food and Drug Administration and Washington Department of Agriculture regulations establish contaminant limits in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

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 microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Out of roughly 100 EPA-regulated contaminants, some parameters are tested continuously, some are tested daily, some weekly, some monthly, some quarterly, and some annually—all in accordance with federal and state regulations. Others, such as UCMR (Unregulated Contaminants) or herbicides, are only required to be tested once every 6 years. Asbestos monitoring is not required for our District because all asbestos pipe in our distribution system was replaced prior to 1991. Tests are done before and after treatment and while your water is in the distribution system.

The Tables presented inside list all of the contaminants detected in the most recent tests compared to the limits and goals set by the EPA and the State of Washington to ensure your tap water is safe. Not shown are more than 200 additional contaminants that were tested for, but not detected, in your drinking water.

If you would like to see a list of these other compounds or if you have other water quality questions, don't hesitate to give us a call at 206.362.8100.

Learn More About Your Water

In addition to the information presented inside, we at North City Water District encourage public interest and participation in the decisions that affect your drinking water. To learn more about our water supply, its quality, and what you can do to help keep our water clean, safe and abundant, give us a call at 206.362.8100.
You are also welcome to attend our Board of Commissioners meetings at 3:00 pm on the first and third Tuesday of each month:
www.northcitywater.org/resources/meeting-schedule-agendas-and-minutes-2/

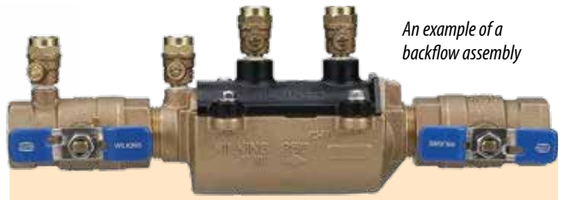
More information about your water can be obtained from:

Seattle Public Utilities: 206.615.0827
www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality

Washington State Dep't. of Health (DOH): 800.521.0323
www.doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Hotline: 800.426.4791
www.epa.gov/safewater - and - www.epa.gov/sdwa

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/how-to-read-drinking-water-quality-reports.html



An example of a backflow assembly

Should You Have a Backflow Prevention Device?

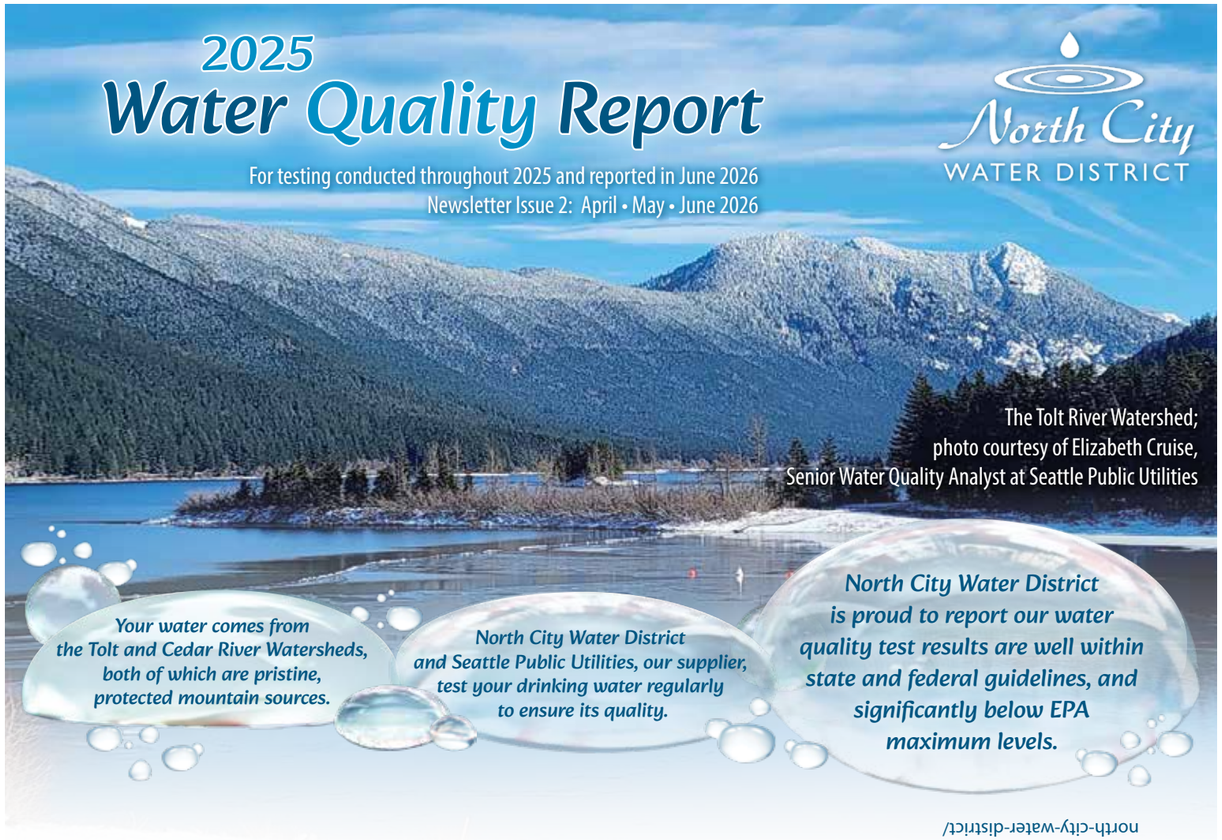
If you have a lawn irrigation system (spray or drip), decorative pond or fountain, hot tub, or swimming pool, you are required to have a "Backflow Prevention Assembly" to keep our water safe from potential cross-contamination getting back into the water system. Once installed, you must get it tested annually by a certified backflow assembly tester, and send a copy of the test record to North City Water District. For more information, give us a call at 206.362.8100 or visit www.northcitywater.org/about-your-water/ccc/

We share our water sources with salmon, trout and many other species. Using water wisely helps protect their habitat.

2025 Water Quality Report

North City WATER DISTRICT

For testing conducted throughout 2025 and reported in June 2026
Newsletter Issue 2: April • May • June 2026



The Tolt River Watershed;
photo courtesy of Elizabeth Cruise,
Senior Water Quality Analyst at Seattle Public Utilities

Your water comes from the Tolt and Cedar River Watersheds, both of which are pristine, protected mountain sources.

North City Water District and Seattle Public Utilities, our supplier, test your drinking water regularly to ensure its quality.

North City Water District is proud to report our water quality test results are well within state and federal guidelines, and significantly below EPA maximum levels.

www.nextdoor.com/agency-detail/wa/shoreline/north-city-water-district/

North City WATER DISTRICT
PO Box 55367
1519 NE 177th Street
Shoreline, Washington 98155
206.362.8100

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The North City Waves Newsletter is brought to you by North City Water District and its Board of Commissioners:

Ron Ricker, President
Patricia Hale, Vice President
Charlotte Haines, Secretary

PO Box 55367 / 1519 NE 177th Street, Shoreline, WA 98155
206.362.8100 • customerservice@northcitywater.org
www.northcitywater.org • / NorthCityWaterDistrict

Table 1: Water Quality Testing Results for 2025

Compounds that were not detected in 2025 are not included in these charts.

Types of Detected Compounds	Units	Primary Source	Ideal Goal (MCLG)	Max. Allowed (MCL)	Levels in the Cedar River Watershed Average	Levels in the Cedar River Watershed Range	Levels in the Tolt Watershed Average	Levels in the Tolt Watershed Range	Meets EPA Stds.?
RAW WATER									
Total Organic Carbon	ppm	Naturally present in the environment	NA	TT	0.7	0.4 to 1.1	1.3	1.1 to 1.5	Yes
FINISHED WATER SOURCE									
Turbidity	NTU	Soil runoff	NA	TT	0.36	0.17 to 3.65	0.04	0.02 to 0.28	Yes
Arsenic	ppb	Erosion of natural deposits	0	10	0.5	0.3 to 0.6	0.3	0.2 to 0.4	Yes
Barium	ppb	Erosion of natural deposits	2000	2000	1.7	1.3 to 2.2	1.3	1.1 to 1.5	Yes
Fluoride	ppm	Water additive to promote strong teeth	4	4	0.7	0.5 to 0.75	0.7	0.6 to 0.75	Yes
SPECIFIC SAMPLES FROM NORTH CITY WATER DISTRICT'S DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM									
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection	NA	80	Average: 35 Range: 18.5 to 41.2				Yes
Haloacetic Acids (5)	ppb	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection	NA	60	Average: 31 Range: 14.6 to 38.2				Yes
Chlorine	ppm	Water additive to control microbes	MRDLG =4	MRDL =4	Highest Monthly Average: 0.94 Range: 0.11 to 1.29				Yes

Table 2: Lead and Copper Monitoring Results for the Tolt Watershed in 2023

Samples are taken every three years; the next samples will be taken in 2026. Five of the 51 samples in the Tolt Watershed were taken in NCWD's service area. None of the samples for the Cedar River Watershed were from NCWD's service area.

Lead and Copper Sampling Program and Units	Ideal Goal MCLG	Action Level [1]	Results of 2023 Samplings [2]	# Homes Exceeding Action Level	Typical Sources in Drinking Water
Lead, ppb	0	15	3.0	0 of 55	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Samples collected in homes within the Tolt water service area.
Copper, ppm	1.3	1.3	0.18	0 of 55	

[1] The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
[2] 90th percentile: 90 percent of the samples were less than the values shown.

Table 3: UCMR5 Results for 2025

Compounds Tested	Units	Method Reporting Limit	January Results	April Results
Lithium, Total	Ug/l	9	ND	ND
PFAS*	Ug/l	Various*	ND	ND

*Per-and Polyflorinated Alkyl Substances (PFAS). Visit our website for additional information and to view test results for the 25 types of PFAS that were tested:

https://www.northcitywater.org/about-your-water/pfas/

In 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enacted legislation requiring public water systems to test drinking water for the group of man-made chemicals labeled PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) by December 2025. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), our source of drinking water, has been monitoring for PFAS in 2015, 2018, and 2023. In 2024, North City Water District began testing SPU's water at the point where it enters our system. In every test to date, your drinking water tested safe and protected from these contaminants. To learn more about PFAS testing and regulations, and what Washington state is doing to restrict PFAS in products, visit the DOH website: https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/pfas

You can also learn more about PFAS from the EPA's website: https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained

Table Definitions

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.

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

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.

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

NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Unit: Turbidity is a measure of how clear the water looks. The turbidity MCL that applied to the Cedar supply in 2025 is 5 NTU, and for the Tolt supply it was 0.3 NTU for at least 95% of the samples in a month. 100% of Tolt samples in 2025 were below 0.3 NTU.

NA: Not applicable.

ND: Not detected.

ppm: 1 part per million = 1 mg/L = 1 milligram per liter.

ppb: 1 part per billion = 1 ug/L = 1 microgram per liter.

1 ppm: = 1000 ppb.

Lead and Copper Monitoring Results

In addition to our regional water supply testing free of lead or copper, in 2023-2024 North City Water District conducted extensive testing to confirm that no lead pipes were found in our water system, including service lines on our customers' side of the meter.

However it is still possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing.

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. North City Water District is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used on the customer side of the meter.

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 at 1.800.426.4791 or at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Conserving Water Together

Water Use Efficiency Report

Because our District is part of a regional water system, we take an active role in managing water use to minimize the amount of purchased water that goes unaccounted for. During 2025, NCWD purchased 592 million gallons of water with a 3.6% distribution system leakage rate—well below the state standard of no more than 10% water loss.

Our region in particular has achieved dramatic results due to heightened water conservation efforts: in the early 1990s, the average gallons used per person per day was over 160. Today, the actual use is just 52 gallons per person per day in our region.

Our District conservation efforts have included everything from public outreach, rebate programs, and tiered pricing, to changes in federal and state plumbing codes—all of which is shared annually by our regional program, the Saving Water Partnership:

www.savingwater.org

During our District's last Comprehensive Water System Plan developed in 2018, our stated goals were to continue supporting community education about the District and water issues; and continue supporting Saving Water Partnership's regional conservation goal of keeping thetotal average annual retail water use of SWP members under 110 mgd through 2028, despite forecasted population growth by reducing per capita water use. During 2025, we were proud to once again exceed that goal by achieving 97.9 mgd. Here's how how you helped make that possible:

- 35 classroom presentations to 727 students about water
- 4 savvy gardener classes with 142 attendees learning about sustainable gardening, attracting bees and butterflies, knockout gardens, and permaculture
- 5 events we attended with our water education booth at: Lake Forest Park Elementary School Science Fair, Lake Forest Park Garden Tour and Market, North City Jazz Walk, Celebrate Shoreline, and Picnic in the Park

Come visit us at this years' events! We will once again be on hand with our Water Education Booths at four events this summer: Lake Forest Park's Garden Tour and Market, Celebrate Shoreline Festival, North City Jazz Walk, and Lake Forest Park's Picnic in the Park. We hope you'll pay us a visit... we love meeting neighbors and answering questions about water!