Hardness Information

What is Hard Water? Water is described as "hard" when it contains high levels of dissolved minerals – primarily calcium and magnesium. These minerals are naturally occurring soluble compounds that are present in the aquifer. Is it harmful? Hard water is not a health risk. Calcium and magnesium are both important to human health and are commonly taken as supplements or as antacids. Remove it with vinegar! Hard water leaves spots on dishes and windows, and a buildup of scale on plumbing fixtures and coffee pots. This can easily be dissipated with white distilled (common household) vinegar: 

- Use vinegar in your dishwashers as a rinse agent.
- Run it through a brewing cycle in your coffee pot twice thoroughly.
- Soak faucets overnight to remove calcium residue.

These tables list the Total Hardness at each Water Treatment Plant. These values are the distilled (common household) vinegar:

- Remove it with vinegar!

Is it harmful? Hard water is not a health risk. Calcium and magnesium are both important to human health and are commonly taken as supplements or as antacids. With the exception of those living in Nassau, Duval, and St. Johns County customers are served by the Major Grid. Our Nassau County customers receive water from the Lofton Oak Grid. JEA customers in the coastal parts of St. Johns County are provided water by the Ponte Vedra Grid in the north and the Peck Pond Lake Grid to the south. There are also two small parts of the county that get their water through interconnections with the St. Johns Utility Department: the Marsh Harbor and Falmouth Valley water systems. These grid arrangements provide reliable water service backup as needed, particularly during emergencies or periods of routine maintenance shutdowns.

How to Connect with Us

You can inquire about your water quality, report a water quality problem, or comment about this report by:
- Calling our Customer Care Center at (904) 665-6000
- Visiting our website at jea.com
- Writing us at JEA Water Quality, 1002 N. Main Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206, Attention: Water Quality Report
- Attending our public board meetings the third Tuesday of every month that JEA, 21 W. Church St. Call (904) 665-6243 for times
- Visiting our website at jea.com/waterqualityreport

The report is available online at jea.com/waterqualityreport. There are also free copies available at all branches of the Jacksonville Public Library and at our Downtown Customer Service Center at 21 W. Church Street. If you'd like us to send you a copy in the mail, simply request copies of this report by calling our Customer Care Center at (904) 665-6000 or toll free at 1-866-663-5452, or you may download an electronic version from our website at www.jea.com/waterqualityreport. Printed copies are also available at every branch of the Jacksonville Public Library.

2013 Annual Water Quality Report

Letter from JEA’s Managing Director and CEO

Dear Valued JEA Water Customer,

We are very pleased to present this year’s 2013 Annual Water Quality Report. We believe it will help keep you informed about the water services we deliver to you, day in and day out, 365 days a year. We are committed to providing you with a safe, reliable and sustainable supply of drinking water. That’s why we constantly confirm your water quality by testing more than 45,000 samples every year.

All of the water we deliver to you meets the standard of Florida Aquifer. It’s located approximately 800 feet below the ground and is protected by a thick layer of clay. This report provides information about JEA’s treatment systems, results from our water quality testing and answers to some frequently asked questions about your water supply.

The report is available online at jea.com/waterqualityreport. There are also free copies available at all branches of the Jacksonville Public Library and at our Downtown Customer Service Center at 21 W. Church Street. If you’d like us to send you a copy in the mail, simply call us at 665-6000 or email your request to WaterQuality@jea.com.

Sincerely,

Paul McElroy, JEA Managing Director & CEO

Frequently Asked Questions

Is JEA’s water really as bad as some people say?

JEA is frequently the target of companies trying to capitalize on the perception that our water quality is poor or even harmful to drink. This perception stems, in part, from a report released in 2009 and 2011 by an “exhausted” environmental group that questions our water quality. The report has not been updated since its initial release in 2009. This report is not a true comparison of water quality data and is biased. For example, the average utility in the study had 420 samples reviewed with 86 detections (1.9%), while JEA had 5,946 samples reviewed with 23 detections (0.39%). Averaging the number of exceedances and percentages per total (13.6%), JEA ranks much better than average.

JEA’s water quality meets every standard demanded by federal and state regulatory agencies — it is safe to drink. Every year we collect and test over 45,000 samples throughout our service territory for over 100 bacteriological and chemical components to ensure compliance. This Annual Water Quality Report shows the results of our testing. As stated in the report, most of the contaminants present in our drinking water occur naturally in the aquifer as low levels, and the lead and copper found in the water comes from contact with household plumbing materials. Additionally, federal and state regulations require drinking water utilities to maintain an adequate chlorine residual to ensure the water is free of pathogens.

Whether or not you like the taste of JEA water is a preference and has no relationship to the drinking water quality. If someone calls you and offers to test your water for free, please keep in mind if they will likely attempt to sell you a water filtration system to change the taste. If any suggestion is made that it is unsafe to consume, please contact JEA with the vendor’s name and phone number so we can address the issue directly with them.

Should I install home water treatment equipment?

Since the water we deliver to you meets all federal and state drinking water standards, the decision to install a point-of-use or point-of-entry home water treatment device is a personal one. If you are concerned with the aesthetic qualities of your water, such as taste, color, and hardness, you might consider a home treatment unit. These systems can cost thousands of dollars, so before investing in a costly unit, make sure that the system you intend to purchase can address your needs. Additionally, it should be certified by NSF International, the Water Quality Association, or Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. to ensure that the manufacturer’s/performances claims are tested and validated. Finally, be sure to follow the directions for cleaning and maintaining the system in order to prevent the growth of potentially harmful bacteria.

Water Conservation

Water conservation is an integral part of JEA’s Total Water Management Plan. It will help us ensure a sustainable supply of fresh water. Here are some simple and sensible conservation tips everyone should follow:

Water Conservation inside Your Home

- Fix leaks, especially toilet leaks.
- Use efficient shower heads and low-flow toilets.
- Run the washer and dishwasher only when full.
- Take shorter showers.
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth.

Water Conservation Outside Your Home

- Plant Florida native plants that do not need as much water.
- Water the lawn and garden only when needed.
- Don’t water when it’s windy.
- Follow mandated watering days and times. Learn these at www.jea.com/wateringdays.

Learn more about JEA’s Watering Tips at www.jea.com/drinkingwater

For information on backflow prevention requirements and JEA’s Cross Connection program, visit www.jea.com/crossconnectioncontrol.
Water Quality Monitoring Results

Terms and Abbreviations

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set by the EPA to enforce the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): 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.

Maximum residual disinfectant level (MRDL): 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.

Maximum residual disinfectant level goal (MRDLG): The level of a disinfectant disinfected water 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.

Draft (NS)-unspecified Standard with sample results below the MCL, and not required to be reported.

Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter (µg/L) - one part by weight of analyte to one million parts by weight of the water sample.

Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/L) - one part by weight of analyte to one thousand parts by weight of the water sample.

Sample 90th percentile exceeding

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule

In order to maintain drinking water quality and to protect public health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a system of Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rules (UCMR) that require the monitoring of contaminants that may be present in source water but are not currently regulated. The UCMR rules are designed to ensure that all sources of drinking water meet the same standard of protection for the health of the public.

The UCMR rules include monitoring for a variety of contaminants, including radionuclides, disinfection by-products, and other agents that may pose a risk to public health. The monitoring results are used to assess the need for further regulation of these contaminants.

The UCMR programs are designed to identify any adverse effects on public health, and to provide information on the potential for other contaminants to pose a risk to public health. The results of the UCMR monitoring are used to inform the development of future regulatory actions, including the development of new regulations and the revision of existing regulations.

Additional Information

Load: If present, elevated levels of load can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children. Load in drinking water is primarily from minerals and contaminants associated withservice lines and water treatment. AL is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water that is current and reliable in the quality of its service lines and water treatment.

The UCMM rule sets the standards for the removal of contaminants from drinking water. The control standards are used to ensure that the removal of contaminants from drinking water is effective and that the public is protected from the potential health risks associated with these contaminants.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Infants, senior citizens, people with compromised immune systems, diabetics, and others with health conditions may be more vulnerable to certain contaminants in water. People should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines are appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4711).

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule

EPA uses the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) program to collect data for contaminants that are not regulated, but that do not have health-based standards established under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Every five years, public water systems serving greater than 10,000 people must conduct this sampling for the purpose of the UCMR. The UCMR provides the data to enable whether or not to regulate these contaminants. The results of our testing in 2011 are drawn on eight (8) different contaminants that were detected or reported. For more information on the UCMR, see the following:

Emerging contaminants include substances that have been identified as emerging threats to public health, and that have the potential to cause adverse health effects or other environmental impacts. The UCMR allows public water systems to monitor for these contaminants to assess their potential risk to public health.

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Important Information

The Annual Water Quality Report is provided to all customers of community water systems on an annual basis as required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The report includes information on the source of drinking water, treatment processes, and water quality. The report is designed to provide customers with the information they need to make informed decisions about their water supply.

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