

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report Agate Heights Service Area *2003 Consumer Confidence Report*

Why am I receiving this report?

In accordance with, the Federal Government's Re-Authorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996, all public water utilities and companies are required to prepare and provide annual drinking water quality reports to their customers. Accordingly, Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is pleased to present you with our third **Annual Drinking Water Quality Report**. As well as being required by Federal Law, we want to keep you informed about the excellent water and sewer services we have delivered to you over the past year. Our goal is, and always has been, to provide to you a safe, dependable, and high quality supply of drinking water.

Where does my drinking water come from?

The Agate Heights water system is served by the Giesbrecht 10-inch artesian well, which is located within the Squalicum aquifer system. This well produces a high quality drinking water supply that contains naturally occurring iron and manganese. The water is drawn from the well and undergoes a chlorination and filtration process to reduce the level of iron and manganese, and to provide chlorine residual to protect the water distribution system. Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is pleased to report that your drinking water is safe and meets or exceeds all federal and state requirements.

Do you have questions or concerns about your drinking water?

If you have any questions regarding this report or concerning your water utility, please contact Chip Anderson at Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District (360) 734-9224. We want our valued customers to be informed about their water utility. If you want to learn more, please attend any of our regularly scheduled Board of Commissioner meetings. They are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the District office at 1010 Lakeview Street and begin at 6:30 p.m. At the beginning and end of each Regular meeting, there is a public comment period where you may express any questions or concerns to the Board.

What's in my drinking water?

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District routinely monitors your drinking water in accordance with Federal and State laws. Included in this report you will find a table that

shows the results for one constituent of a total of 76 that are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) that were detected during the period of January 1st to December 31st, 2003. If you would like to obtain a complete listing of all constituents please contact the District. All drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some constituents and/or contaminants. It's important to remember that the presence of these constituents does not necessarily pose a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800)-426-4791. In the following table you will find many terms and abbreviations you might not be familiar with. To help you better understand these terms we've provided the following definitions:

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Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter (ug/L) - one part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years, or a single penny in \$10,000,000.

Million Fibers per Liter (MFL) - million fibers per liter is a measure of the presence of asbestos fibers that are longer than 10 micrometers.

Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) - nephelometric turbidity unit is a measure of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

Maximum Contaminant Level - The "Maximum Allowed" (MCL) is 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.

MCL's are set at very stringent levels. To understand the possible health effects described for many regulated constituents, a person would have to drink 2 liters of water every day at the MCL level for a lifetime to have a one-in-a-million chance of having the described health effect.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal - The "Goal" (MCLG) is 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.

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 cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800)-426-4791.

Testing completed by Whatcom County Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District and State certified laboratories

Detected Contaminant	Violation Yes/No	2003 (or most recent) Level	MCL	MCLG	Likely Source of Contamination
Arsenic	NO	4 ppb	50 ppb	0 ppb	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, runoff from glass, and electronics production wastes.
Copper	NO	204 ppb was the highest level detected	1,300 ppb	1,300 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits, leaching from wood preservatives
Fluoride	NO	150 ppb	4,000 ppb	4,000 ppb	Erosion of natural deposits, water additive which promotes strong teeth, and discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
Nitrate (as Nitrogen)	NO	15 ppb	10,000 ppb	10,000 ppb	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits

Facts about detected contaminants

- 1) **Arsenic** – While your drinking water meets EPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. EPA's standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. EPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.
- 2) **Copper** - Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal doctor.
- 3) **Fluoride** - Some people who drink water containing fluoride in excess of the MCL over many years could get bone disease, including pain and tenderness of the bones. Children may get mottled teeth.
- 4) **Nitrate** - Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue-baby syndrome.

Cross Connections may be Hazardous to your Health!

What is a Cross Connection? A Cross Connection is any actual or potential physical connection between a potable water line and any pipe, vessel, or machine containing a non-potable fluid, solid, or gas where the non-potable substance can enter the potable water system by backflow.

Should I be concerned about Cross Connections and Backflow? Definitely! The most common Cross Connection in a residential setting is a garden hose. Garden hoses left connected and turned on when not in use, can easily contaminate your home plumbing system. Irrigation systems, heat pumps, and boilers for hot water base board heating systems all present potential cross connections that could cause hazardous conditions. If you have any questions or concerns about potential Cross Connections please contact Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District employees Randy Craker or Chip Anderson at (360) 734-9224.

New Payment Methods Available!

In the very near future the District will begin accepting payment of rates and charges by using both debit card, and Mastercard and Visa credit cards. The District is also actively pursuing an Automatic Withdrawal Payment for your convenience.

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District Board of Commissioners

Position & District	Name	Address	Telephone #
President, Geneva	Todd Citron	4700 Lakeway Dr. Bellingham, WA 98229	734-3453
Secretary, Sudden Valley	Thomas Hadd	1364 Sudden Valley Bellingham, WA 98229	738-4849
Commissioner, Geneva	Blair Ford	1003 Lake Whatcom Blvd. Bellingham, WA 98229	734-2634
Commissioner, Sudden Valley	Vincent D'Onofrio	748 Sudden Valley Bellingham, WA 98229	647-7631
Commissioner, Northshore	Deborah Kingsley- Lambert	3277 Northshore Rd. Bellingham, WA 98226	733-2408

Our commitment to our customers!

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District staff are on duty around the clock to provide the safest and best quality water to every home. We ask that all our customers help us protect our precious water sources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life, and our children's future.