Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report
Geneva 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 sixth **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 District purchased the water supplied to your home from the City of Bellingham. The District then distributed the water in our own water distribution system to your tap. The City of Bellingham uses two surface water sources for your drinking water, Lake Whatcom and the Nooksack River. The City of Bellingham draws its water from Basin #2 of Lake Whatcom. The City then pumps the water to its Water Filtration Plant, where it undergoes filtration and disinfection. The water we received from the City of Bellingham was a very high quality drinking water supply. 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 and the City of Bellingham routinely monitor for nearly 250 constituents and/or contaminants in your drinking water in accordance with

Federal and State laws. Included in this report you will find a table that shows the results of six constituents 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 1-800-426-4791.

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:

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 Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District and the City of Bellingham

Detected Contaminant	Violation Yes/No	2003 (or most recent) Level	MCL	MCLG	Likely Source of Contamination
Asbestos	NO	.191 MFL	7 MFL	7 MFL	Decay of asbestos cement water mains, erosion of natural deposits
Copper	NO	38 ppb was the highest level detected	1300 ppb	1300 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits, leaching from wood preservatives
Lead	NO	5 ppb was the highest level detected	15 ppb	0	Corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits
TTHM Total Trihalomethanes	NO	30.4 ppb average of 16 samples range was 21.0 ppb to 44.9 ppb	80 ppb	0	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAAs Haloacetic Acid 5	NO	13.1 ppb average of 16 samples range was 3.7 ppb to 17.7 ppb	60 ppb		By-product of drinking water chlorination
Turbidity	NO	0.05 ntu was the highest recorded at City's plant	5.0 NTU	N/A	Soil runoff
Sodium	NO	7.2 ppm	None	N/A	Erosion of natural deposits
Sulfate	NO	10 ppm	250 ppm	N/A	Erosion of natural deposits

Facts about detected contaminants

1) **Asbestos** - Some people who drink water containing asbestos in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of developing intestinal polyps.

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) **Lead** - Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

4) **TTHMs** (Total Trihalomethanes) **& Haloacetic Acid-5** (HAAs) - Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may

experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

5) **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.

What about the new water line?

In 2001 the Board of Commissioners of Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District decided to undertake the construction of a water intertie line to connect the Sudden Valley and Geneva water systems together. The Sudden Valley Geneva Intertie is now complete and fully operational. The intertie serves two major purposes. First to provide a lower cost source of water for Geneva customers. Second to provide an emergency source of water for Sudden Valley. Since January Geneva customers have been supplied with water treated at the District's filtration plant in Sudden Valley. The District's water filtration plant in Sudden Valley produces very high quality water, so Geneva customers will continue to receive an excellent product.

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 (i.e., drinkable) 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 either debit card, and Mastercard and Visa credit cards. The District is also actively pursuing an Automatic Withdrawal Payment for your convenience.

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.