



2025 Water Quality Report

City of Appleton Water Utility

Second Place — National Best Tasting Water Competition

2025 AWWA Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado

Important Information

This report contains important information about your drinking water. Please contact a Utilities Department representative if you would like to know more about the information contained in this report at (920) 997-4200 or email: waste_water@appletonwi.gov

Información importante!

Este informe contiene información importante acerca de su agua potable. Haga que alguien lo traduzca para usted, o hable con alguien que lo entienda.

Dlaim ntawv tshaabzu nuav muaj lug tseemceeb heev nyob rua huv kws has txug cov dlej mej haus. Kuas ib tug paab txhais rua koj, los nrug ib tug kws paub lug thaam.

This report contains important information about your drinking water. Have someone translate it for you or talk to someone who understands it.

The Utilities Committee meets TUESDAY of the week following Common Council at 4:30 p.m., in Committee Room 6A of City Center. Please go to <https://cityofappleton.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> for meeting dates and agendas.

Direct payments of your utility billing are available. Please see the City's website: <https://cms2.revize.com/revize/appletonwi/Documents/Finance/utility.pdf>

Or pay your utility bill online at: <https://client.pointandpay.net/web/CityofAppletonWIUtilityBilling>

About Our Water System

The Appleton Water Utility provides safe, abundant drinking water to the City of Appleton, Harrison Utilities, the Town of Grand Chute, and the Village of Sherwood. The utility is a self-financed enterprise owned by the City of Appleton. Appleton tap water meets all federal and state health-protection standards, and is regulated by:

- Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

Water Treatment Process

The Appleton Water Treatment Facility draws from Lake Winnebago and treats it through a multi-step process:

- Lime softening and granular activated carbon filtration for turbidity removal
- Ultraviolet (UV) light disinfection for Cryptosporidium inactivation
- Fluoride addition for dental health
- Chlorine disinfection for ongoing protection through the distribution system



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Source of Appleton's Drinking Water

Appleton's drinking water source is Lake Winnebago, located in the Fox and Wolf River watersheds. As water travels over land and through rivers and lakes, naturally occurring substances (called contaminants) may dissolve into it. Surface water sources can also be susceptible to stormwater pollution. For more information on stormwater pollution:

https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stormwater/learn_more/problems.html

To obtain source water information, contact the Utilities Department at (920) 997-4200 or email waste_water@appletonwi.gov.

Health Information

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 is available by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

Vulnerable Populations

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population, including:

Immuno-compromised persons, individuals undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune disorders, some elderly individuals, and infants.

These individuals should seek advice from their healthcare provider. EPA/CDC guidelines are available at the Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

Sources of Drinking Water Contaminants

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants (e.g., viruses and bacteria) — from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants (e.g., salts and metals) — naturally-occurring or from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides — from agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants — by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production; also from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants — naturally occurring or from oil and gas production and mining activities.

The EPA prescribes regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish equivalent limits for bottled water. For an easy-to-read EPA booklet on drinking water, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water>



Glossary of Terms

The following definitions apply to the data tables in this report:

AL (Action Level) — The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

HA / HAL (Health Advisory / Health Advisory Level) — HA: Health Advisory — an estimate of acceptable drinking water levels for a chemical based on health effects. HAL: the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, poses a health risk and may require public notice. Determined by US EPA.

HI (Hazard Index) — Used to assess potential health impacts of contaminant mixtures. If a Hazard Index is exceeded, a system may be required to post a public notice.

Level 1 Assessment — A study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine, if possible, why total coliform bacteria have been found.

Level 2 Assessment — A detailed study of the water system to identify potential problems, typically conducted after an E. coli MCL violation or repeated total coliform detections.

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 best available technology.

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.

MFL — Million fibers per liter.

MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level) — The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water.

MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal) — The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health.

mrem/year — Millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body).

NTU — Nephelometric Turbidity Units.

pCi/l — Picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity).

ppm / ppb / ppt / ppq — Parts per million (mg/l) / parts per billion (µg/l) / parts per trillion (ng/l) / parts per quadrillion (pg/l).

PHGS (Public Health Groundwater Standards) — Found in NR 140 Groundwater Quality. The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, poses a health risk and may require a public health notice.

RPHGS (Recommended Public Health Groundwater Standards) — Groundwater standards proposed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, poses a health risk and may require a public health notice.

SMCL (Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level) — Standards for contaminants that affect taste, odor, or appearance of drinking water. SMCLs do not represent health standards.

TCR — Total Coliform Rule.

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



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Detected Contaminants

Your water was tested for many contaminants last year. We are allowed to monitor for some contaminants less frequently than once a year. The following tables list only those contaminants which were detected in your water. If a contaminant was detected last year, it will appear in the following tables without a sample date. If the contaminant was not monitored last year but was detected within the last 5 years, it will appear in the tables below with the sample date.

Disinfection Byproducts

Contaminant (units)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
HAA5 (ppb)	N-10	60	60	19	18–21		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-10	80	0	37.1	32.3–42.0		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	N-11	60	60	20	13–24		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-11	80	0	39.0	34.9–42.7		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	N-13	60	60	21	19–24		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-13	80	0	38.3	34.4–45.2		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	N-2	60	60	19	19–20		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-2	80	0	39.3	28.7–46.4		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	N-4	60	60	19	17–20		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-4	80	0	40.8	34.2–47.1		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	N-9	60	60	20	17–21		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	N-9	80	0	42.9	34.7–52.7		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	S-4	60	60	19	16–22		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	S-4	80	0	37.5	27.6–42.8		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
HAA5 (ppb)	S-6	60	60	21	17–23		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
TTHM (ppb)	S-6	80	0	39.0	32.1–42.7		No	By-product of drinking water chlorination



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Inorganic Contaminants

Contaminant (units)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Antimony Total (ppb)		6	6	0.4	0.4		No	Discharge from petroleum refineries; fire retardants; ceramics; electronics; solder
Arsenic (ppb)		10	n/a	1	1		No	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; glass and electronics production wastes
Barium (ppm)		2	2	0.004	0.004		No	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Beryllium Total (ppb)		4	4	0.03	0.03		No	Discharge from metal refineries and coal-burning factories; electrical, aerospace, and defense industries
Chromium (ppb)		100	100	1	1		No	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)		4	4	0.6	0.6		No	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive for dental health; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Nitrate (NO ₃ -N) (ppm)		10	10	0.63	0.63		No	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks/sewage; erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)		n/a	n/a	13.00	13.00		No	n/a

The following contaminants are regulated by Action Level (AL) rather than an MCL:

Contaminant (units)	Action Level	MCLG	90th Percentile	Range	# Results	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Copper (ppm)	AL=1.3	1.3	0.1790	0.0100–0.4470	0 of 63 above AL		No	Corrosion of household plumbing; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives



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Contaminant (units)	Action Level	MCLG	90th Percentile	Range	# Results	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Lead (ppb)	AL=15	0	1.30	0.00–6.40	0 of 63 above AL		No	Corrosion of household plumbing; erosion of natural deposits

PFAS Contaminants

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of human-made chemicals used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. Appleton participated in UCMR5 (Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 5) testing. The table below lists PFAS contaminants detected in your water that have a Recommended Public Health Groundwater Standard (RPHGS) or Health Advisory Level (HAL). There are no violations for detections that exceed the RPHGS or HAL.

Note:

The recommended health-based levels shown below were in effect in 2024 and have since been revised by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) in 2025. Current levels can be found at: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/gws.htm>

Contaminant (units)	RPHGS or HAL (PPT)	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Typical Source
PFBS (ppt)	450,000	0.82	0.82	1/4/2023	Drinking water is one way people can be exposed to PFAS. PFAS can enter groundwater from manufacturing sites and consumer products in landfills.
PFHxS (ppt)	40	0.59	0.59	1/4/2023	
PFOS (ppt)	20	1.00	1.00	1/4/2023	
PFOA (ppt)	20	1.40	1.40	1/4/2023	
PFHxA (ppt)	150,000	0.50	0.50	1/4/2023	
PFOA and PFOS Total (ppt)	20	2.40	2.40	1/4/2023	

Radioactive Contaminants

Contaminant (units)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Combined Uranium (µg/l)		30	0	0.4	0.4	4/13/2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits



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Synthetic Organic Contaminants Including Pesticides and Herbicides

Contaminant (units)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Atrazine (ppb)		3	3	0.1	0.0–0.1	4/18/2023	No	Runoff from herbicide used on row crops

Contaminants with a PHGS, HAL, or Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level

The following table lists contaminants detected in your water that have either a Public Health Groundwater Standard (PHGS), Health Advisory Level (HAL), or a Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL). There are no violations for detections that exceed Health Advisory Levels, Public Health Groundwater Standards, or Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels. Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels do not present health concerns but may pose aesthetic problems such as objectionable taste, odor, or color.

Contaminant (units)	SMCL (ppm)	PHGS or HAL (ppm)	Level Found	Range	Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
Chloride (ppm)	250		21.00	21.00	9/7/2022	No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits, road salt, water softeners
Sulfate (ppm)	250		33.00	33.00		No	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits, industrial wastes

Unregulated Contaminants

Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted. EPA required us to participate in this monitoring. We are only required to include results showing detections within this report; however, if you would like a copy of all results, please contact us.

Contaminant (units)	Level Found	Range	Sample Date (if prior to 2025)
Metolachlor (Dual) (ppb)	0.03	0.02–0.03	4/18/2023
PFBA (ppb)	0.0059	0.059	9/10/2024

Additional Health Information

Lead

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. Appleton



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Waterworks is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components within your home. You share the responsibility for protecting yourself and your family from the lead in your home plumbing. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Before drinking tap water, flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water.

If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact Appleton Waterworks — Michael Suha at (920) 997-4200.

Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at: www.epa.gov/safewater/lead

Service Line Materials Inventory

We developed an inventory of service lines connected to our distribution system. You can access the service line inventory here:

https://appletonwi.gov/government/departments/public_works/water_distribution/lead.php

Operational Monitoring Results

Turbidity Monitoring

In accordance with NR 810.29, Wisconsin Administrative Code, treated surface water is monitored for turbidity to confirm that filtered water is ≤ 0.3 NTU in at least 95% of measurements taken each month, and never exceeds 1 NTU. In 2025, the highest single entry point turbidity measurement was 0.13 NTU. The lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the turbidity limits was 100 percent.

Key Performance Indicators

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS						
Compliance Monitoring						
Violations	Lead	Disinfection Byproducts	Inorganics	PFAS	Secondary Contaminants	Turbidity
0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%