

**Biddeford-Saco Division**

January 1 through December 31, 2023



Dear Valued Customer:

At Maine Water, we know that water touches everything we care about. Our team of 80 dedicated, highly trained professionals is committed to providing you with a reliable supply of high quality water and responsive service. We know the most important thing we do each and every day is to provide clean, reliable drinking water and exceptional service to each of our customers.

We strive to make this report easy to read to help you understand more about your drinking water – where it comes from, what is done to protect and treat it, and what is in it. Within these pages are details about the drinking water quality test results, the source(s) of the drinking water supply, and an assessment about the susceptibility of water supply sources to potential contamination.

Maine Water is committed to the stewardship of its water resources, land and the environment and to its protection and conservation for current and future generations. We have a comprehensive source protection program for our water supplies, aquifers and watershed areas.

Maine Water's 2023 Annual Water Quality Reports include the results of more than 1700 water samples tested at state certified laboratories for more than 120 potential contaminants and water quality parameters. Delivering reliable drinking water to our customers and communities is our highest priority. Our Maine Water team appreciates the trust you put in us every day when you turn on the tap, and we are committed to honoring that trust and delivering you a world-class product. If you have any questions or comments about your drinking water or this report, please call our Customer Service staff at 1-800-287-1643 or send an e-mail to [customerservice@mainewater.com](mailto:customerservice@mainewater.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A Vannoy".

Mark A Vannoy  
President

# 2023 Water Quality Report – Biddeford & Saco Division

Maine Water Company Biddeford & Saco Division PWSID# ME0090170



Maine Water is pleased to present a summary of the quality of the water provided to you during the past year. This report is consistent with the requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, to report annually the details of where your water comes from, what it contains, and the risks that our water testing and treatment are designed to prevent.

Federal law allows water providers to make the annual water quality reports available online. Paper copies can be mailed to customers who request it. We will notify customers through our notification system, bill inserts, news releases, our website and social media any time a new water quality report has been posted to our website. If you have any questions about this report, please call us at 1-800-287-1643 or email [customerservice@mainewater.com](mailto:customerservice@mainewater.com).

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**Sources of Supply:** *The Saco River is the sole source of water for the Biddeford Saco water system. It begins as a small stream high in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and flows through 136 miles of New Hampshire and Maine forest and farmland before reaching our treatment facility. The Saco River watershed covers an area of roughly 1,700 square miles. We are fortunate that the Saco River is one of the cleanest major rivers in Maine and New England, due in part to the lack of any substantial industrial development along its shoreline. In fact, the majority of the Saco River in Maine has been given the cleanest rating possible for a river. To learn more about the watershed, go to U.S. EPA's Surf Your Watershed at [http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc\\_code=01060002](http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc_code=01060002).*

*The system maintains an interconnection with Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Wells Water District in Biddeford Pool. Additional information on the Saco River watershed and land use regulations in place for the watershed can also be obtained through the Saco River Corridor Commission's internet site at [www.sccc-maine.org](http://www.sccc-maine.org).*

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## **For the year 2023, we are pleased to report that your drinking water met all national primary drinking water standards.**

Sources of drinking water include rivers, lakes, ponds and wells. As water flows on the surface of the land or through the ground, it can dissolve naturally occurring minerals and in some cases, radioactive material, and can also accumulate substances resulting from human and animal activity. The Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) has evaluated all public water supplies as part of the Source Water Protection Program. The assessments included geology, hydrology, land uses, water testing information, and the extent of land ownership or protection by local ordinance to see how likely our drinking water source is being contaminated by human activities in the future. In 2015, a source water assessment was completed for the Biddeford Saco system and indicates a low risk of significant contamination. Assessment results are available at town offices, public water supplies and the DWP (207.287.2070).

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharge, oil and gas production, mining or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, storm water runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemicals contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organics, are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.

- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring, or can be the results of oil or gas production or mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is acceptable for drinking, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations established limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

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 can be obtained at EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline website <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-hotline>.

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 microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline website <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-hotline>.

## Protecting Water Sources



Source water is untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, or underground aquifers that is used to supply public drinking water. Preventing drinking water contamination at the source makes good public health sense, good economic sense, and good environmental sense. Most contaminants enter rivers, lakes and reservoirs from storm water runoff of streets, parking lots, golf courses, athletic fields, construction sites, farms and residential neighborhoods. You can be aware of the challenges of keeping drinking water clean and take an active role in protecting drinking water.

There are lots of ways that you can get involved in drinking water protection activities to prevent the contamination of groundwater and surface water sources:

- Restrict the use of lawn chemicals, especially before heavy rains.
- Dispose of pet or animal waste properly so that it does not wash into a nearby stream or storm drain.
- Inspect septic tanks every two years, and clean as needed. Make septic system repairs as soon as possible.
- Do not pour used motor oil on the ground or into storm drains. Contact your town for proper disposal of household chemicals.
- Report muddy runoff from construction sites to your town's zoning or wetland officials.

## Educational Information on Lead & Copper



We believe it is important to provide you with information about the sources of lead and copper in drinking water and the health effects associated with them.

### ***What is Lead?***

Major Sources in Drinking Water: Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits.

Health Effects Statement: Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. 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 water containing lead in excess of the action level over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Maine Water Company is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home where they could potentially cause result in lead in your drinking water. If you are concerned about the potential for lead in your drinking water from in-home plumbing and fixtures, 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. This is important especially in cases where you may not have used your water over a period of several hours and it's been sitting in the pipes. You may also 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 (<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-hotline>) or [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead) Where needed, we have a comprehensive corrosion control program, to reduce risk of lead leaching from our customers' service line or internal plumbing. This includes pH monitoring and adjustment. And, we fully comply with EPA requirements regarding sampling for lead in drinking water.

### ***What is Copper?***

Major Sources in Drinking Water: Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives

Health Effects Statement: 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. If you are concerned about elevated lead or copper levels, you may wish to have your water tested. Running your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before use will significantly reduce the levels of lead and copper in the water. Additional information is available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline website <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-hotline>.

For information on the levels of lead and copper detected in your drinking water system, please refer to the table in this water quality report.

# Unregulated Contaminants: PFAS in Water Sources



PFAS (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used around the world since the 1940s for many industrial and consumer purposes including the coating of fabrics, nonstick cookware, food packaging, and firefighting foam.

These chemicals can accumulate over time and have been found in both the environment and the human body. They do not break down easily in the environment or the human body and are sometimes called “forever chemicals”.

Of these chemicals, the most extensively produced and studied have been PFOA and PFOS.

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*At this time, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and states across the country are working to develop appropriate standards for these chemicals in drinking water. In 2021, the State of Maine passed LD 129 mandating that Public Water Systems test the treated drinking water for PFAS in 2022.*

*To see the document copy this link to your browser*

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0064&item=3&snum=130>

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Maine Water is in full compliance with Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standards and the guidelines for risk assessment of all water sources and systems as well as all the monitoring and testing requirements under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) to date.

For more information and source water testing results, please visit [www.mainewater.com/water-quality](http://www.mainewater.com/water-quality) and find our section on PFAS or the Maine Water Drinking Program, <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/water/>

# Water Quality Data – Biddeford & Saco Division



The following table lists the contaminant levels that were detected in your water system. The table provides the maximum observed levels of regulated contaminants. The Safe Drinking Water Act allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old. The Safe Drinking Water Act also allows monitoring waivers to reduce or eliminate certain monitoring requirements. *No testing waivers were granted in 2023.*

**Turbidity Levels:** Turbidity is a measure of cloudiness or suspended colloidal matter (silt). Excessive turbidity can interfere with water disinfection. The standard for turbidity is that 95% of all readings in each month are less than 0.3 NTU and a single day maximum is less than 1 NTU. The maximum monthly high turbidity during 2023 was 0.86 NTU which occurred in May.

**Microbiological Contaminants:** In 2023, two of the 488 distribution system samples tested positive for Total coliform bacteria. The sample, collected in May, was negative for E.coli. Resamples taken were negative for coliform bacteria. Total coliform bacteria are naturally present in the environment and are an indicator of disinfection effectiveness.

**Violations:** No violations in 2023.

## National Primary Drinking Water Contaminants

*Legally enforceable primary standards and treatment techniques that apply to public water systems*

Compounds	Test Date	Violation Y / N	Detection Value	Range of Detection	Federal/State Standard		Major Sources in Drinking Water
					MCL/ MRDL	MCLG/ MRDLG	
<b>Inorganics and Radionuclides</b>							
Barium, ppm	2023	N	<0.010	NA	2	2	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride, ppm	2023	N	0.63	0.45 - 0.63	4	4	Water additive which promotes strong teeth
Nitrate, ppm	2023	N	<1.0	NA	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Erosion of natural deposits.
Combined Radium, pCi/l (226, 228)	2018	N	1.5	NA	5	0	Erosion of natural deposits
Radium-226, pCi/l	2018	N	0.44	NA	5	0	Erosion of natural deposits
Radium-228, pCi/l	2018	N	1.1	NA	5	0	Erosion of natural deposits

<b>Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts</b> -- Compliance for Haloacetic Acids and Total Trihalomethanes is based on a running annual average of quarterly samples. The range shows the highest and lowest result for all individual sample locations during 2023.							
Total chlorine, ppm	2023	N	1.66 avg.	1.17 – 1.90	4	4	Water additive used to control microbes
<b>Haloacetic Acids (HAA5), ppb</b> Biddeford Animal Hospital Blue Point School Old Orchard Beach Town Hall Route 1 Irving Gas Station	2023	N N N N	28.0 25.8 30.3 29.0	18 - 35 19 - 34 24 - 40 21 - 36	60	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
<b>Trihalomethane (TTHM), ppb</b> Biddeford Animal Hospital Blue Point School Old Orchard Beach Town Hall Route 1 Irving Gas Station	2023	N N N N	24.5 27.0 26.5 24.5	16 - 36 21 – 38 21 – 36 18 – 34	80	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection

**Lead and Copper Results**-- Samples are from consumer's taps. 90% of the tests must be equal to or below the action level for rule compliance.

Lead and Copper	Test Date	90th Percentile	Range of detections	Total Number of Samples	Samples Exceeding Action Level	Federal/State Standard		Major Sources in Drinking Water
						Action Level	MCLG	
Copper, ppm	2021	0.137	0.007-0.236	62	0	1.3	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing
Lead, ppb	2021	5.8	0-49.6	62	2	15	0	

For more Lead & Copper data: <https://www.mainewater.com/water-quality/lead-test-results>

**All other regulated drinking water contaminants were below detection levels.**

**National Secondary Drinking Water Contaminants**

*Non-enforceable guidelines regulating contaminants that may cause cosmetic effects (such as skin or tooth discoloration) or aesthetic effects (such as taste, odor, or color) in drinking water.*

Parameter	Test Results 5/18/2023	Secondary MCL	Noticeable Effects above the MCL
pH	7.15	6.5 – 8.5	Neutral = 7
Chloride, ppm	16	250	Salty taste
Sodium, ppm	8.2	No limit	Salty taste
Iron, ppm	<.050	0.3	Rust color; sediment; metallic taste; reddish orange staining
Manganese, ppm	0.016	0.05	Black to brown color; black staining; bitter taste
Hardness, ppm	13 Soft	No limit	Scaly residues; soaps that don't lather

## Unregulated Water Contaminants

Contaminants that are suspected to be present in drinking water and do not have health-based standards set under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)

Parameter	Sampling Point	Test Results 6/15/2022	MCL	MCLG	Sources in Drinking Water
Per & Poly-fluoroalkal substances (6 PFAs) (ppt)	Treated Water	Not Detected	20 ppt	0	By-product of industrial process and consumer products

PFAS are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and therefore have no federally-established Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) that would require action such as treatment to remove these compounds from drinking water. EPA has established a Health Advisory of 70 parts per trillion (ppt), combined, for two PFAS compounds: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS).

PFOA and PFOS are fluorinated organic chemicals that are part of a larger group of chemicals referred to as perfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs). PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. They have been used to make carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food and other materials (e.g., cookware) that are resistant to water, grease or stains. They are also used for firefighting at airfields and in several industrial processes.

To provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water, EPA established the health advisory levels at **70 parts per trillion**. The EPA's health advisories are based on the best available peer-reviewed studies of the effects of PFOA and PFOS on laboratory animals (rats and mice) and were also informed by epidemiological studies of human populations that have been exposed to PFASs.

### UCMR 4 Monitoring Results 2018-2019:

EPA uses the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) program to collect nationally representative data for contaminants suspected to be present in drinking water, but that do not have regulatory standards.

Parameter	Sampling Point	Average of Test Results	Range of Test Results	Sources in Drinking Water
Manganese, ug/L	Treatment Plant	15.8	9.9 – 24.6	Erosion of natural deposits
Total Organic Carbon, ug/L	Untreated Water, Saco River	4015	3220 – 5520	Naturally found in surface waters
9 Haloacetic acids, ug/L	Distribution site HAA51	14.8	6.3 – 20.2	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
9 Haloacetic acids, ug/L	Distribution site HAA52	20.9	15.3 - 32	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
9 Haloacetic acids, ug/L	Distribution site HAA53	23.4	17 – 28.1	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
9 Haloacetic acids, ug/L	Distribution site HAA54	23.5	17 – 30.2	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection



**Notes:**

**Action Level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements.

**Fluoride:** Fluoride may help prevent tooth decay if administered properly to children, but can be harmful in excess. US Department of Health and Human Services recommend a level of 0.7 ppm. Fluoride levels must be maintained between 0.5 and 1.2 ppm.

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** 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. Some levels are based on a running annual average.

**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 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.

**NA:** Not applicable.

**ND:** Not detected.

**NTU:** Nephelometric turbidity unit (cloudiness of water)

**Picocuries/Liter, pCi/L:** A unit of concentration for radioactive contaminants.

**ppb:** A unit of concentration equal to one part per billion. Equal to micrograms per liter (ug/L).

**ppm:** A unit of concentration equal to one part per million. Equal to milligrams per liter (mg/L).

**ppt:** A unit of concentration equal to one part per trillion. Equal to nanograms per liter (ng/L).

**PWSID:** Public water supply identification number.

**Running Annual Average (RAA):** The average of all quarterly samples for the last year at all sample locations.

**TTHM and HAA5:** Total Trihalomethanes and Haloacetic Acids are formed as a byproduct of drinking water chlorination. This chemical reaction occurs when chlorine combines with naturally occurring organic matter in water.

**Total Coliform Bacteria:** Reported as the highest monthly number of positive samples, for water systems that take < 40 samples per month.

**Turbidity:** Monitored as a measure of treatment efficiency for removal of particles.

**ug/L:** A of concentration equal to micrograms per liter. Equal to parts per billion (ppb).

**Nitrate:** Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant you should ask advice from your health provider.

**Arsenic:** While your drinking water may meet EPA's standard for Arsenic, if it contains between 5 to 10 ppb you should know that the standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the cost of removing it 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.

**Our water systems are designed and operated to deliver water to our customers' plumbing systems that complies with state and federal drinking water standards. This water is disinfected using chlorine, but it is not necessarily sterile. Customers' plumbing, including treatment devices, might remove, introduce or increase contaminants in tap water. All customers, and in particular operators of facilities like hotels and institutions serving susceptible populations (like hospitals and nursing homes), should properly operate and maintain the plumbing systems in these facilities. You can obtain additional information from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800.426.4791**

# WATER CONSERVATION

Conserving water helps ensure that we have an adequate supply of water for public health and safety and reduces demands on the state's water resources. A typical household uses 15,000 gallons of water per quarter, or 60,000 gallons a year. YOU can play a role in conserving water by being conscious about the amount of water your household is using.

Here are some ways to conserve.  
Find more on our social media handles:



### REPAIR leaky toilets

Check for leaks by putting food coloring in the tank; if the food coloring seeps into the bowl without flushing, there is a leak.

**Potential Savings:**  
73,000 gallons/year



### CONSIDER a low flow toilet

Modern toilets use just 1.6 gallons per flush, versus older models using 3.5 gallons per flush.

**Potential Savings:**  
15,000 gallons/year



### RUN full loads in the washer & dishwasher

Go ahead and fill'er up! Full loads of laundry and dishes save water AND energy.

**Potential Savings:**  
3,400 gallons/year



### COVER UP - your pool

Pool covers not only keep out leaves and debris, they reduce up to 95% of evaporation.

**Potential Savings:**  
20,000+ gallons/year



### WATER EARLY, not often

Lawns develop short root systems when watered every day. Water just once or twice a week in the morning to maximize root health and avoid water loss from evaporation

**Potential Savings:** 6,750 gallons per watering day avoided for every .25 acres of lawn



### TURN OFF the tap

Running water during toothbrushing, shaving and washing dishes all adds up; turn off the tap when you don't need the water

**Potential Savings:** 3,000 gallons/year through toothbrushing alone

Maine Water is committed to preserving our environment for generations to come. Conserving open spaces and drinking water sources through:

Protection of WATERSHED LANDS

WATER CONSERVATION education and programs

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS to reduce system water loss

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN of buildings and facilities