



261 W. Water Street
Elmira, NY 14901

Annual Drinking Water Quality Report 2019
(Issued March 2020)
PWSID #NY0701008

Dear Elmira Water Board Customers:

This publication contains a summary of the Quality of the water provided to you during the past year. Federal and state requirements set the measuring standards by which we are evaluated. In 2019, the EWB met or exceeded all federal and state requirements

Why Water Conservation is Part of “Going Green”

Only 3% of the world’s water is fresh water, and of this 2/3 is stored in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves only 1% of the world’s water available for drinking. “Going green” means protecting our water against the constant threat of pollution and conserving our usage.

Save Energy:

Reduce usage of hot water, washing machine, dishwasher, etc; if possible, replace existing high energy consuming appliances.

Save the Environment:

Landscape with plants that require little water, water the lawn less frequently (before dawn/after sunset); try catching rain water for outdoor use. Look for nontoxic alternatives for household products. Avoid using garbage disposals (try to compost food waste); putting food waste, oils, and grease down the drain burdens waste water treatment plants and affects aquatic life and water quality downstream.

Save Money:

Water conservation will lower your water bill, sewer tax, and energy costs. We are fortunate to have an abundant local water supply; future generations will judge us on how we protected and preserved it.

Information on Contaminants and Their Potential Health Effects

Important Education Information if you are Immunocompromised or have an Infant

Although our drinking water meets or exceeds state and federal regulations, some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons are especially at risk. Such persons can be for example: persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy; persons who have undergone organ transplants; persons with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders; the elderly and infants can be particularly at risk of infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791). Please call our office if you have questions.

All 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 the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791). As a precautionary measure, all customers are urged to flush their cold water taps each morning 30 seconds to 2 minutes to remove contaminants that may come from house water lines.

Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. Filtration and disinfection are the best methods for guarding against microbiological contaminants, although a 100% removal or inactivation cannot be guaranteed. We at the Elmira Water Board have installed adequate filtration and disinfecting equipment for proper and effective treatment of our water.

Drinking Water Sources

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activities. Contaminants that may be present in source water include: microbial, inorganic, pesticides and herbicides, organic, chemical, and radioactive.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the state and the EPA prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The State Health Department's and the RDA's regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

Since 1889 the primary source of water for the EWB has been the Chemung River, in 2019, 65% of our raw water came from the river. Wellfields, Foster Island #40 & #41 contributed 20.2% and Hudson Street #1A, contributed 13.5 % of 2019's source water. The first EWB water source (circa 1872) was the Hoffman Reservoir, which is now used on a standby basis and provided 1.3% of our raw water in 2019.

Instead of using any one source alone, all raw (untreated) water from the river, wells, and reservoir are blended to provide a better water product. We treat the blended water by adding poly aluminum chloride, which causes natural contaminants like silt and germs to coagulate and settle out before filtration. We add chlorine to destroy any viruses, bacteria or organisms that may survive the settling process. We add fluoride for dental health, then add caustic soda and phosphate to help prevent corrosion of household plumbing.

Lead Discussion

Lead. If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. The Elmira Water Board is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, 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. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may 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 or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>

Harmful Algae Blooms Discussion

In recent years some cities have experienced toxic blue green algae blooms. We tested our water during the hot summer months and found no traces of algae.

2019 Water System Improvements

- Replaced 4,620 ft. of cast iron water main
- Continue lead service line replacement

2020 Water System Planned Improvements

- Replace 5,000 – 6,000 ft. of cast iron water main
- Well Redevelopment
- Continue lead service line replacement
- Convert Meter Read System from touch pad to radio-read

Fluoride Treatment Discussion

The EWB is one of many systems in NYS that provides drinking water with a controlled, low level of fluoride for consumer dental health protection. The United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), recommends a dosage of 0.7 mg/l (parts per million). To ensure that the fluoride supplement in your water provides optimal dental protection, the State DOH requires that we monitor fluoride levels on a daily basis.

Detected Substances

In 2019, we tested for over 200 contaminants. The table that follows shows the substances that were detected. None of these contaminants exceeded the regulated levels established by the EPA and NYS.

To obtain more information on the details of the non-detected contaminants and source water results, please visit our website www.elmirawaterboard.org/awqr or your Steele Memorial Public library downtown Elmira branch for a copy of the Recent Analytical Results and Sample Plan for the distribution system.

Source Water Assessment Summary Elmira Water Board #NY0701008 January 19, 2005

The NYS DOH has completed a source water assessment for the Elmira Water Board, based on available information. Possible and actual threats to multiple drinking water sources were evaluated. The state source water assessment includes a susceptibility rating based on the risk posed by each potential source of contamination and how easily those contaminants can move about. The susceptibility rating is an estimate of the potential for contamination of the source water, it does not mean that the water delivered to consumers is, or will become, contaminated. See page 2 of this report for a list of the contaminants that have been detected. The source water assessments provide resource managers with additional information for protecting source waters into the future.

The assessment found an elevated susceptibility to contamination for the surface water sources, the Chemung River and Hoffman Reservoir. The amount of agricultural lands in the assessment area results in elevated potential for protozoa and pesticides contamination. While there are some facilities present, permitted discharges do not likely represent an important threat to source water quality based on their density in the assessment area. However, it appears that the total amount of wastewater discharged to surface water in this assessment area is high enough to further raise the potential for contamination (particularly for protozoa). There are no noteworthy contamination threats associated with other discrete contaminant sources. Finally, it should be noted that relatively high flow velocities make river and reservoir drinking water supplies highly sensitive to existing and new sources of microbial contamination.

The assessment of the five active wells found them to have a medium-high to high susceptibility to microbials, nitrates, industrial solvents, and other industrial contaminants. These ratings are due primarily to the close proximity of industrial/commercial facilities that discharge wastewater into the environment and low intensity residential activities in the assessment area.

Please note that water from all the sources is blended and treated at the filtration plant to provide disinfection and to remove contaminants. There are also wellhead protection rules in place for the wells, and watershed protection rules for the Hoffman Reservoir. These rules give legal authority to forbid activities and discharges that could cause gross contamination in these sources.

Giardia Discussion

Giardia is a microbial pathogen often found in rivers and lakes. Giardia is removed/inactivated through a combination of filtration and disinfection. During 2017, we tested 9 samples of mixed river and well water collected before disinfection and filtration. Low levels of Giardia were reported in 2 of 9 source water samples. Note that our filtration plant is designed and operated to meet State and Federal standards for the removal of Giardia and similar pathogens. Ingestion of Giardia may cause Giardiasis, an intestinal illness. Symptoms may be absent, or mild to severe diarrhea can occur. Fever is rarely present. Occasionally some individuals will have chronic diarrhea over several week or a month, with significant weight loss. Giardiasis can be treated with anti-parasitic medication. Individuals with weakened immune systems should consult with their health care providers about what steps would best reduce their risk of Giardiasis. Individuals who think that they may have been exposed to Giardiasis should contact their health care providers immediately. The Giardia parasite is passed in the feces of an infected person or animal and may contaminate water or food. Person to person transmission may also occur in day care centers or other settings where hand washing practices are poor.

Water Chemistry Definitions, Terms, & Abbreviations

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

“<” = less than

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to MCLG as possible.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): The level of 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 in drinking 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.

“N/A” not applicable: Not related to the matter described.

Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU): Measure of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

Parts per million (ppm): Corresponds to one part of liquid in one million parts of liquid.

Parts per billion (ppb): Corresponds to one part of liquid in one billion parts of liquid.

pH units: A measure of acidity or alkalinity of the water.

Picocuries per liter (pCi/L): A measure of the radioactivity in water.

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

EWB Statistics	
Average Daily Distribution System Use	5.3 Million Gallons
Total Water Produced	1.9 Billion Gallons
Population Served - approximate	54 Thousand
Unaccounted For Water	25.60%
Accounts	17,398
Average Annual Residential Use	44,637
Average Annual Residential Bill	\$348.57
Miles Of Water Main	225 Miles
Number Of Hydrants	1,239

Elmira Water Board Directory	
Mark D. LaDouce, General Manager	733-9179
Main Office Monday through Friday 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Customer Service & Billing Information	733-9179
David McCarty, Chief Water Treatment Operator	732-2277
Filtration Plant 24/7 Water Quality Questions & To Report An Emergency	732-2277
Elmira Water Board Website	www.elmirawaterboard.org
Public Elmira Water Board Meetings 1 Fountain Drive, Elmira, NY Call Main Office for dates and times	733-9179
Other Important Water Numbers	
Chemung County Health Department To answer water questions	737-2019
Chemung County Health Department Website (click on the environmental tab to view the drinking water page)	www.chemungcountyhealth.org
Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Hotline	1-800-426-4791

Table of Detected Contaminants

Contaminant	Violation Yes/No	Date of Sample	Level Detected	Units of Measure	MCL G	Regulatory Limit (MCL)	Likely Source of Contamination
Inorganic Contaminants:							
Barium	no	5/21/2019	0.09	ppm	2	2	Erosion of natural deposits
Nickel	no	5/21/2019	1	ppb	n/a	n/a	Naturally occurring
Chloride	no	In 2019: daily	High 83 Low 56	ppm	n/a	250	Naturally occurring; use of road salt
Lead - sampled at customer faucets	no	August 2017	*90th % 4.0 High 6.2 Low <.5	ppb	0	AL=15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
*90th Percentile: Out of 30 samples tested 90% of the samples had a lead concentration of 4.0 ppb or less with 0 samples exceeding the 15 ppb action level (AL)							
Copper - sampled at customer faucets	no	August 2017	*90th % .10 High .23 Low .003	ppm	1.3	AL=1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
*90th Percentile: Out of 30 samples tested 90% of the samples had a copper concentration of .10 ppm or less with 0 samples exceeding the 1.3 ppm action level (AL)							
Fluoride	no	In 2019: daily	High .74 Low .64	ppm	n/a	2.2	Water additive which promotes strong teeth
Nitrates	no	5/21/2019	1.11	ppm	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use
*Sodium	no	5/21/2019	41	ppm	n/a	no designated limits	Naturally occurring; use of road salt
*Sodium: Water containing more than 20 ppm of sodium should not be used for drinking by people on severely restricted sodium diets. Water containing more than 270 ppm of sodium should							
New York State allows us to test for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do no change frequently. For this reason							
Disinfection By-Products:							
Total Organic Carbon (TOC) Source	no	In 2019: monthly	High 4.3 Low 2.0 Average 3.1	ppm	n/a	n/a	Naturally occurring organic materials from decaying leaves & plants
Total Organic Carbon (TOC) Treated	no	In 2019: monthly	High 2.6 Low 1.5 Average 2.0	ppm	TT	TT	Source same as above, treated samples measure the effectiveness of our water treatment process
Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) *LRAA (Locational Running Annual Average): average of last 4 quarters	no	In 2019: 3/18, 6/17, 9/16, 12/16	Quarterly Individual Samples High 69 Low 20	Highest*LRAA at 8 sites 53	ppb	n/a	*RAA Quarterly Average 80 By-product of drinking water chlorination needed to kill harmful organisms; formed when source water contains large amounts of organic matter
Haloacetic Acids (HAA) *LRAA (Locational Running Annual Average): average of last 4 quarters	no	In 2019: 3/18, 6/17, 9/16, 12/16	Quarterly Individual Samples High 28 Low 1.4	Highest Quarterly Average at 8 sites 31	ppb	n/a	*LRAA Quarterly Average 60 By-product of drinking water chlorination needed to kill harmful organisms
Microbiological Contaminants:							
*Turbidity after purification plant	no	In 2019: every 4 hours	100% of 2,190 results < 0.3	ntu	n/a	TT=0.3	Soil runoff
*Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.							
Turbidity at customer tap	no	In 2019: daily	High .56 Low .04	ntu	n/a	TT=5	Suspended particles in water from piping
Chlorine	no	In 2019: daily	High 1.14 Low .15 Average .69	ppm	MRDL G 4.0	MRDL 4.0	Level of disinfectant necessary for control of microbial contaminants
Orthophosphate	no	In 2019: daily	High 1.11 Low .92	ppm	n/a	TT=0.5-5.0	Water additive for corrosion control
pH	no	In 2019: daily	High 7.9 Low 7.6 Average 7.7	pH units	n/a	TT=>7.4	A pH value below 7 can release metals like lead from household plumbing, while a level above 7 reduces corrosion
Alkalinity	no	In 2019: daily	High 130 Low 96	ppm	n/a	TT=>39	Water additive for corrosion control
Radioactive Contaminants:							
Gross beta	no	5/20/2019	1.63	pCi/L	n/a	New York State considers 50 pCi/L to be the level of concern	Erosion of natural deposits
In 2019, over 3,000 total water samples were taken with no violations found!							