

# Drinking Water Quality

12th Annual Water Quality Report  
April 2010

## Drinking Water Quality Report

Golden Heart Utilities is proud of the fine drinking water it provides. This annual water quality report shows the source of our water, lists the results of our 2009 tests, and contains important information about water and health.

Golden Heart Utilities will notify you immediately if there is any reason for concern about our water. We are happy to report to you that we have surpassed established water quality standards.

Golden Heart Utilities is in compliance with the national primary drinking water regulations, and has met all testing and monitoring requirements. The EPA has determined that our water is of high quality at the tested and monitored levels (*see tables inside*).

**We are proud to report that the water provided by Golden Heart Utilities meets or exceeds established water quality standards.**



**www.akwater.com**  
**479-3118**

## From the Vice President's Office by Oran Paul

Once again Golden Heart Utilities (GHU) is pleased to present this year's annual drinking water quality report. This report is designed to inform you about the high quality water and services we deliver to you every day.

The water quality professionals here at GHU are committed to providing our customers with a dependable supply of excellent drinking water. We ensure quality by constantly monitoring our drinking water before, during and after the treatment process. We take this commitment very seriously.

The best way to ensure safe drinking water is to prevent it from becoming contaminated in the first place. Protecting the quality of our drinking water is everyone's responsibility. As residents of the Tanana Valley, we

all have a role to play in ensuring the safety of our water supply by properly handling and disposing of contaminants such as oils, solvents, chemicals, cleaners and other hazardous waste. By working together, our community can be assured of maintaining the abundant supply of fresh clean water we enjoy today.

I am pleased to once again report that GHU's drinking water exceeds all federal and state drinking water requirements. I encourage each of our customers to visit our website at [www.akwater.com](http://www.akwater.com) to learn more about the utility that provides water and sewer service to our community. If you have suggestions on how we can improve our service to you and the community please forward your comments to our customer service



staff. We value you as a customer and look forward to continually providing quality service to you in the future.

## Customer Service

by Scott MacDonald

I am pleased to be included in this annual report to our customers. Our customer service

professionals are here to assist our customers with anything related to their account,



and to provide that personal touch to anyone contacting our offices. When your phone call is answered "The Water Company," you can have confidence that a real person will be addressing your concerns or questions. I would like to highlight some of the ways we can help you. First, our offices are located at 3691 Cameron Street, across from Sam's Sourdough Cafe. We provide the administrative support for both College Utilities and Golden Heart Utilities, which allows those two operational companies to focus on providing water and wastewater service to the community. We encourage you to call us if you have questions, and to always call the utility first if you are having trouble with your service.

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## Where does our water come from?

Fairbanks is fortunate to have an abundant supply of fresh water. We operate four wells, 70 to 90 feet deep, which pump an average of 5 million gallons per day. These wells tap the huge aquifer that lies beneath the Tanana Valley. Since our water is supplied from deep wells we avoid the kinds of contaminants that may come from surface water runoff.

## Water Testing & Your Health

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes limits on the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water.

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 by calling Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

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 the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminates 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, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, 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 chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organics, are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants, can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than is the general population. Immuno-

compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons 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* are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

## Drinking Water Test Results

The tables to the right show the results of our water quality analysis. Every regulated contaminant that we detected in the water, even in the most minute traces, is listed there. The table contains the name of each substance, the highest level allowed by regulation (MCL), the ideal goals for public health (MCLG), the amount detected, the usual sources of such contamination, footnotes explaining our findings and a key to units of measurement. Definitions of MCL and MCLG are important.

### Key to table

- AL** Action Level or the concentration which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- MCL** Maximum Contaminant Level or the highest level of contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- MCLG** Maximum Contaminant Level Goal or 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.
- NTU** A Nephelometric Turbidity Unit is a measure of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.
- pCi/L** PicoCuries per Liter, term of "activity" per unit volume or mass at 20°C. A picocurie has a relation of 2.22 disintegrations per minute.
- ppm** parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L). The same as one minute in two years or one penny in \$10,000.
- ppb** parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/L). The same as one minute in 2,000 years or one penny in \$10,000,000.



*Christie Lutsch, Utility Lab Technician, conducts numerous tests each day to ensure the quality of our water.*

## Detected Contaminants

Contaminant	Inorganic	Volatile Organic		Radiological
	Fluoride	HAA5*	TTHM*	Radium 228
Date Tested	2009	2009	2009	2006
Unit	ppm	ppb	ppb	pCi/L
MCL	4	60	80	5
MCLG	4	0	0	0
<b>RAA*</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>24.88</b>	<b>51.00</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Range	0.7-1.2	19.4-30.0	28.9-72.7	1.4
Major Sources	Water additive to promote strong teeth	By-products of water chlorination	By-products of water chlorination	Erosion of natural deposits
Violation	NO	NO	NO	NO

\* RAA= Running Annual Average, HAA5= Haloacetic Acids, TTHM= Total Trihalomethanes

## Other Monitoring

In addition to the testing we are required to perform, our water system voluntarily tests for hundreds of additional substances to make certain your water is safe and of high quality.

Substance	Frequency	MCL	Recent Results	Compare to MCL
Alkalinity	daily	no limit	150 ppm as CaCO <sub>3</sub>	—
Chlorine	daily	4 ppm	0.8 ppm	5 times better
Hardness	daily	no limit	143 ppm as CaCO <sub>3</sub>	—
Turbidity	daily	1 NTU	0.06 NTU	16.7 times better
pH	daily	6.5-8.5 units	8.5 units	within range
Iron	monthly avg.	300 ppb	40 ppb	7.5 times better
Manganese	monthly avg.	50 ppb	20 ppb	2.5 times better
Dissolved Solids	monthly avg.	500 ppm	194 ppm	2.6 times better
Arsenic	every 3 yrs	10 ppb	0.532 ppb	18.8 times better
Gross Alpha & Beta*	every 4 yrs	15 pCi/L	2.0±1.8 pCi/L	3.9-75 times better
Barium	every 9 yrs	2,000 ppb	55.6 ppb	36 times better
Sodium	not required	250 ppm**	16.6 ppm	15 times better
Copper	not required	1300 ppb (AL)	0.254 ppb	5118 times better

\* Radionuclides \*\*Suggested Limit

The following substances were tested for and were not detected in our treated water: Benzene, Nitrate, Nickel, Antimony, Thallium, Beryllium, Cyanide, Lead, Chromium, Uranium, Radium 226, Coliform.

Data in this report is from the most recent testing done in accordance with regulations and presented as required by 40 CFR 141.153 and 141.154. The state requires GHU to monitor for certain contaminants less than once a year because concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year.

## Attention Property Owners & Managers

This report is mailed to all water customers at their billing address. Certain residents and tenants may not receive a copy of this report if the property owner or manager is receiving the water bill. While not required by law, property owners and managers, as well as business owners, are encouraged to provide this information to their tenants. This report may be photocopied and distributed, or posted in a prominent place at the facility. More copies are available at our administrative offices at 3691 Cameron Street or at [www.akwater.com](http://www.akwater.com).



## Only Tap Water Delivers – That’s Our Motto!

During the first full week of May, water utilities across the country celebrate National Drinking Water Week. This special week has been designated by the American Water Works Association to help bring attention to safe drinking water and raise awareness to the importance of protecting our water supply. As part of this celebration, our utility visits elementary schools with our mascot “Cool Blue” as well as offering tours at the water treatment plant. In culmination of the week’s activities, the utility hosts the annual, family oriented Water Walk and Run on May 5. For additional information visit our website at [www.akwater.com](http://www.akwater.com).



*Water Walk and Run fun in 2009.*

## Additional Health Information for Lead in Drinking Water

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant woman and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Golden Heart Utilities is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of material 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 [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

*Customer Service continued from page 1*

You all know that the utility owns and operates the system of water mains, pumps and treatment facilities. But, did you know the customer owns and is responsible for maintaining the laterals or more properly termed “service connections” which extend from the utility’s main to the property owners’ facilities? If a customer contacts the utility with concerns

about their service, we will determine if the problem is in the utility’s main. If so, the problem will be corrected by the utility. If the problem is in the service line, then the customer will be advised to contact a plumber. It is always advantageous to call the utility first for utility problems. Don’t forget, our 24-hour phone number is 479-3118.

## Got leaks?

Leaky faucets, toilets and showers can add up on your water bill. Check seals often. Stop by customer service for more information and a free toilet leak detection kit.



We are Utility Services of Alaska, “The Water Company” to those of you who have called our offices. We are located at 3691 Cameron Street, Suite 201 just off of University Avenue. Our office provides administration and customer service support to both Golden Heart Utilities and College Utilities. Please feel free to call or visit our friendly and helpful customer service department.



*Our customer service representatives are ready to serve you!*

## Experiencing a Water Problem? Call the Utility First!

Call the utility at our 24 hour number 479-3118 before you call the plumber. Customers experiencing problems with their service line should always call the utility first. We can tell you if there is a problem in your area that may be affecting your service, or we can send out a crew to check our mains and determine where the problem is located.

**479-3118**



## Want to Learn More About Your Water Company?

Visit our utility’s website at [www.akwater.com](http://www.akwater.com) to learn about conservation and other helpful information about our utility, including how to contact our Customer Service Department to obtain a copy of our Source Water Assessment.

We’re happy to answer any other questions about **Golden Heart Utilities** and our water quality. For general information or for water quality questions call customer service at 479-3118.

### Other Resources:

Environmental Protection Agency’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

Water Quality Data for community water systems throughout the United States is available at [www.waterdata.com](http://www.waterdata.com)

## From the Lab: Pink Discoloration Associated with Standing Water

Christie Lutsch, Utility Lab Technician, conducts numerous tests each day to ensure that the quality of our water complies with all national and state drinking water standards. Christie operates our state certified lab in compliance with strict industry procedural and reporting standards mandated for drinking water. Christie's expertise is called upon when customers contact the utility with technical water questions. Recently she's received questions from customers related to pink slime found in and around the bathroom, or pink solids at the bottom of pet water bowls. Please read on for some information about one probable source of these pink slimes and solids.

### **Serratia marcescens**

Christie received a call from a customer who stated they were seeing pink solids at the bottom of their dog's water bowl and just above the water line in the toilet, as well as pink slime in and around the shower. She did some research and thinks she has identified the culprit.

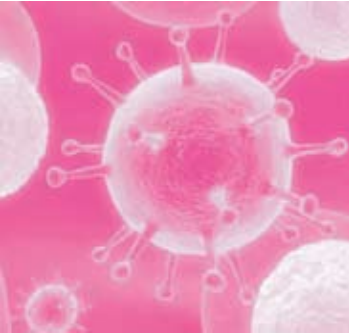
*Serratia marcescens* is an airborne bacterium that thrives in moist locations, in the presence of phosphorous or fatty substances. The most common sources of fat and phosphorous are soaps and food residue.

This bacterium is very common in our environment and can be found in dust, soils and surface waters. People tend to see the evidence of *S. marcescens* in the summer months, when the windows are more likely to be open, but it can also show up in

the winter when new construction or remodeling might stir up dust inside the home.

*S. marcescens* will not survive in drinking water that has sufficient chlorination. This bacterium is not known to cause any waterborne diseases.

The best way to try to control the appearance of the pink slime or solids is to do a complete periodic cleaning of the surfaces where it tends to appear. This should be followed by disinfection with bleach. To reduce the chances of the appearance of the discoloration, try to remove standing or puddle water in and around the shower after each use.



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**Bring water to the thirsty puppy!**

