

ANNUAL

WATER  
QUALITY  
REPORT

*Water testing performed in 2009*



PWSID#: TX2400001

This report was prepared by:  
Jefferson Water Treatment Plant  
5816 Daugherty Ave.  
Laredo, TX 78041

Este reporte incluye informacion importante sobre el agua para tomar. Para asistencia en español, favor de llamar al telefono (956) 721-2000.

## Utility Introduction

**D**ear Customer, The City of Laredo, provides you with water that meets all the health and safety standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

We regularly test water samples to be sure that your water meets the safety standards. All the test results are on file with the TCEQ, our state regulatory agency. The EPA and the TCEQ establish these regulations. They also require water suppliers to mail a Water Quality Report to customers on an annual basis. This Water Quality Report contains important information about your drinking water. Please feel free to call us at (956) 721 - 2000 if you have any questions about your water or your water service. You can also call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800 426 - 4791 with water-related questions.



For more information about this report, please call Juan Carlos Mojica, Water Pollution Control Superintendent, at (956) 721-2000, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Tony Moreno, Water Treatment Superintendent at (956) 795-2620.

## Community Participation

**Y**ou are invited to participate in our public forum and voice your concerns about your drinking water. We meet the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month beginning at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1110 Houston Street, Laredo, Texas.

## Where Does My Water Come From?

**T**he Laredo water system provides roughly 40 million gallons of treated and purified water daily for nearly 200,000 residents in the metropolitan Laredo area. The source of your drinking water is the Rio Grande River.

We strive to provide you with drinking water that meets or surpasses all state and federal standards. Water is purified at the Jefferson Street Water Treatment Plant. We purify the water using chemical treatment as well as settling and filtration techniques. Water treatment chemicals include lime, ferric sulfate, chloramines (chlorine and ammonia), alum, and polymers. These are added to remove impurities, kill harmful bacteria and eliminate unpleasant tastes and odors. Once the water is treated, the water is transported under pressure through a system of storage tanks and a 450-mile network of pipes to your tap.

## Information on the Internet

**T**he U.S. EPA Office of Water ([www.epa.gov/watrhome](http://www.epa.gov/watrhome)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Web sites provide a substantial amount of information on many issues relating to water resources, water conservation and public health. Also, the TCEQ has a Web site ([www.tceq.com](http://www.tceq.com)) that provides complete and current information on water issues in Texas, including valuable information about our watershed.

You can find a copy of the Water Quality Report on the web at [www.cityoflaredo.com](http://www.cityoflaredo.com). To learn more about environmental issues, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). To learn more about Texas' Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us).



## Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. EPA prescribes regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish 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 these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

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 can acquire naturally

occurring minerals, in some cases, radioactive material; and substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Substances 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 may result from urban stormwater 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, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses; Organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and which may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems; Radioactive Contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

Contaminants may be found in drinking water that may cause taste, color, or odor problems. These types of problems are not necessarily causes for health concerns. For more information on taste, odor, or color of drinking water, please contact our business office. For more information about contaminants and potential health effects, call the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Water Conservation

We encourage our customers to use water wisely. You can play a role in conserving water and saving yourself money in the process by becoming conscious of the amount of water your household is using and by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water. You can reduce your water consumption by up to 25 percent by taking just a few simple steps. Here are a few tips:

- 1) Check your faucets for leaks. Just a slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons a day.
- 2) Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Watch for a few minutes, If it shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. A leaking toilet can lose up to 100 gallons a day.
- 3) Take shorter showers or install water-saving showerheads.
- 4) Chill tap water in the refrigerator for drinking.
- 5) Run the washing machine and the dishwasher only with full loads.
- 6) Set your lawn mower one notch higher. Longer grass allows less evaporation.
- 7) Using an attended hand-held hose for watering is allowed any day at any time, except on Sundays.
- 8) Automatic dishwashers use 15 gallons for every cycle, regardless of how many dishes are loaded. So get a run for your money and load it to capacity.
- 9) Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- 10) Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Simply turn off all taps and water using appliances. Then check the meter after 15 minutes. If it moved, you have a leak.
- 11) Water only on your designated days and only during the designated hours. If your address ends in an even number, then water only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. If your address ends in an odd number, then water only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. This schedule is only for automatic irrigation systems and sprinkler attachments connected to water hoses.

The City of Laredo approved the "Water Conservation & Drought Contingency Plan" within Ordinance #2005-O-339 on September, 2009. For more water conservation tips, to learn more about the changes of the ordinance, or to report the misuse of water, please contact your Water Conservation Program at (956) 721-2020.

## Testing For Cryptosporidium

*Cryptosporidium* is a microbial parasite found in surface water throughout the U.S. Although filtration removes *Cryptosporidium*, the most commonly used filtration methods cannot guarantee 100 percent removal. Symptoms of infection include nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the disease within a few weeks. However, immuno-compromised people are at greater risk of developing life-threatening illness. We encourage immuno-compromised individuals to consult their doctor regarding appropriate precautions to take to avoid infection. *Cryptosporidium* must be ingested to cause disease, and it may be spread through means other than drinking water. The results indicate that we do not have *Cryptosporidium* or Giardia in our drinking water.

## Tap vs. Bottled Water

Thanks in part to aggressive marketing, the bottled water industry has successfully convinced us all that water purchased in bottles is a healthier alternative to tap water. However, according to a four-year study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council, bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water. In fact, about 25 percent of bottled water is actually just bottled tap water (40 percent according to government estimates).

The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for regulating bottled water, but these rules allow for less rigorous testing and purity standards than those required by the U.S. EPA for community tap water. For instance, the high mineral content of some bottled waters makes them unsuitable for babies and young children. Further, the FDA completely exempts bottled water that's packaged and sold within the same state, which accounts for about 70 percent of all bottled water sold in the United States. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. So, what's the bottom line? If bottled and tap water meet the federal standards, they are both safe to drink. However, your tap water is substantially less expensive than bottled water.

People spend 10,000 times more per gallon for bottled water than they typically do for tap water. If you get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to \$1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about 49 cents. Even if you installed a filter device on your tap, your annual expenditure would be far less than what you'd pay for bottled water.

For a detailed discussion on the NRDC study results, check out their Web site at [www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bw/exesum.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bw/exesum.asp).

## Lead and Drinking Water

If present, elevated levels of 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. We are 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 [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

## Important Health Information

You may be more vulnerable than the general population to certain microbial contaminants, such as *Cryptosporidium*, in drinking water. Infants, some elderly, or immunocompromised persons such as those undergoing chemotherapy for cancer; those who have undergone organ transplants; those who are undergoing treatment with steroids; and people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders can be particularly at risk from infections. You should seek advice about drinking water from your physician or health care provider. Additional guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* are available from the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.



## Which household activity wastes the most water?

Most people would say the majority of water use comes from showering or washing dishes; however, toilet flushing is by far the largest single use of water in a home (accounting for 40% of total water use). Toilets use about 4-6 gallons per flush, so consider an ultra-low-flow (ULF) toilet, which requires only 1.5 gallons.

## Should I use hot water to make baby formula?

No. Hot water may contain impurities such as rust, copper, and lead that come from the hot water heater and plumbing in your house. These impurities can generally dissolve into hot water faster than into cold water.

## Drinking Water Sampling Results

During the past year we have taken hundreds of water samples in order to determine the presence of any radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic or synthetic organic contaminants. The table below shows data obtained for testing from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009. The state allows us to monitor for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations of these substances do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES							
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Barium (ppm)	2009	2	2	0.073	NA	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chloramines (ppm)	2009	[4]	[4]	3.00	1.24–3.00	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Combined Radium (pCi/L)	NA	5	0	1.3	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	2009	4	4	0.52	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Haloacetic Acids [HAA] <sup>1</sup> (ppb)	2009	60	NA	17.0	13.3–20.3	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2009	10	10	0.69	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] <sup>1</sup> (ppb)	2009	80	NA	27.7	24.9–49.6	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Coliform Bacteria (% positive samples)	2009	More than 5% positive monthly samples	0	3.33	0.00–3.33	No	Naturally present in the environment
Total Organic Carbon (ppm)	2009	TT	NA	1.39	0.67–2.17	No	Naturally present in the environment
Turbidity <sup>2</sup> (NTU)	2009	TT	NA	0.10	0.04–0.10	No	Soil runoff
Turbidity (Lowest monthly percent of samples meeting limit)	2009	TT	NA	100	NA	No	Soil runoff

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH% TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2009	1.3	1.3	0.057	0/50	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives
Lead (ppb)	2009	15	0	0.0013	0/50	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

<sup>1</sup>Footnote for Jefferson Water Treatment Plant: Reported as (RAA) Running Annual Average

<sup>2</sup>Footnote for Jefferson Water Treatment Plant: Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is monitored because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the filtration system.

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. Any unregulated contaminants detected are reported in the following table. For additional information and data visit [www.epa.gov/safewater/ucmr/ucmr2/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/ucmr/ucmr2/index.html), or call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Definitions

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

**MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level):** 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.

**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.

**MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level):** 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.

**MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal):** 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):** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

**NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units):** Measurement of the clarity, or turbidity, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

**pCi/L (picocuries per liter):** A measure of radioactivity.

**ppb (parts per billion):** One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

**ppm (parts per million):** One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

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