



**"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY"**

# **Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS**

C. RAY NAGIN, *President*

625 ST. JOSEPH STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70165 • 504-529-2837 OR 52W-ATER  
[www.swbnola.org](http://www.swbnola.org)

June, 2009

To: Sewerage and Water Board Customers

From: Robert Jackson, Director, Community and Intergovernmental Relations Department

Re: "Quality Water 2008" Report

Every Sewerage and Water Board customer will receive a brochure by mail advising them that their tap water, supplied by the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, "meets all federal and state drinking water quality standards."

The mailer is called "Quality Water 2008". This is the 11<sup>th</sup> time the Board has distributed this Consumer Confidence Report. It is a requirement of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and must be mailed to all customers once a year, advertised in the Times Picayune newspaper, posted on the Board's website and be available at government offices and libraries.

It is named "Quality Water 2008" because all of the tests results are from 2008. You may have some questions, simply because the report is technical in nature and many chemical names and terms are used. While we would have liked to make it simpler, most of the wording used (including the names of all the chemical compounds) is required by the EPA.

If you have questions that are technical in nature, please call the S&WB Water Quality Laboratory, 865-0420.

We are pleased to provide this very positive report, which shows that the water supplied by the Sewerage and Water Board is of the highest quality and meets or surpasses all drinking water standards and regulations.

The entire report is posted here on the website. We hope that you will review it to learn about the purification process and the quality of your drinking water.

**Scroll to View The Entire Report**

# 2008 quality WATER

A REPORT ON THE STATE OF TAP WATER IN NEW ORLEANS



New Orleans' drinking water meets all federal and state drinking water standards.

## SOURCE and TREATMENT

**Our source water is the Mississippi River. This water is treated at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant for East Bank customers and at the Algiers Water Treatment Plant for West Bank customers. In 2008 the Carrollton Water Purification Plant provided an average of 130 million gallons of drinking water per day to a population estimated to be about 274,543 people. The Algiers Water Plant provided an average of 11 million gallons of drinking water per day to a population estimated to be about 57,225 people.\* The treatment process at each plant is similar. The raw river water is treated with chemicals called "coagulants" which cause the small particles in the water to come together to form larger particles which are then allowed to settle out of the water. Rapid sand filtration is used to remove even smaller particles. During the process chloramine is added to disinfect the water. Lime is added to provide corrosion control and to increase the pH of the water to stabilize the disinfectant.**

## Restoration Remains a Priority As Sewerage and Water Board Continues to Provide Customers with High Quality, Safe and Dependable Drinking Water Supply

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans takes great pride in providing the citizens of New Orleans with a constant supply of high quality drinking water.

The men and women of the Board are at work 24 hours a day, seven days a week to produce the water and distribute it through 2,000 miles of pipes, mains and service connections to a population of 331,768.

The water is also carried at high pressure to approximately 15,000 fire hydrants for firefighting purposes.

Many of the Board's water facilities, especially on the East Bank where damage from Katrina was extensive, have moved from the recovery stage to the restoration process. This was accomplished through much dedication and many skills of our water department team and all the support departments so vital to the process.

At the Carrollton Water Purification Plant, millions of dollars have been spent to repair damages, upgrade systems and provide increased maintenance.

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# How contaminants can get into SOURCE WATER

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, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

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, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or 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 byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive contaminants**, which 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, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates and establishes limits for contaminants in bottled water.

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 (1-800-426-4791).

A Source Water Assessment has been conducted by the State of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. This is an assessment of a delineated area around our listed sources through which contaminants, if present, could migrate and reach our source water. It also includes an inventory of potential sources of contamination within the delineated area, and a determination of the water supply's susceptibility to contamination by the identified potential sources. According to the Source Water Assessment, our water system had a susceptibility rating of high. If you would like to review the Source Water Assessment, contact the Sewerage and Water Board Laboratory at (504) 865-0420.



# definitions

**Parts per million or ppm** – This is a measure of concentration which corresponds to one milligram of a substance in one liter of water (mg/L), or about one drop in 10 gallons.

**Parts per billion or ppb** – This is a measure of concentration which corresponds to one microgram of a substance in one liter of water (ug/L), or about one drop in 10,000 gallons.

**Picocuries per liter or pCi/L** – This is a measure of the radioactivity in water.

**Nephelometric Turbidity Unit or NTU** – This is a measure of the cloudiness of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our treatment system.

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

**Treatment Technique or TT** – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

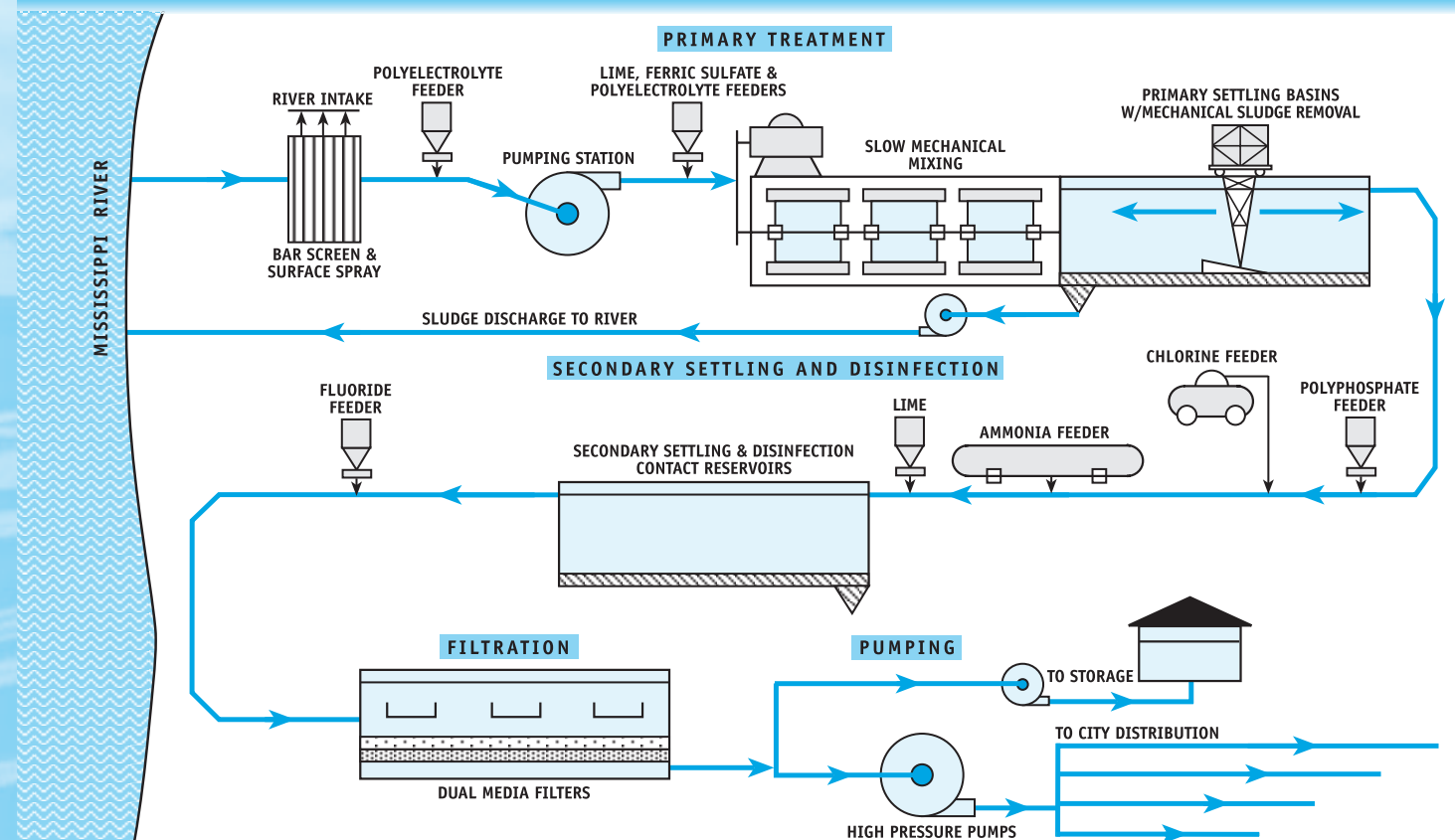
**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal or MCLG** – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Maximum Contaminant Level or 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.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)** – The highest level of 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.

## General flow diagram of water purification process



# DRINKING WATER Quality Results

from 2008 Compliance Monitoring

From January 1st thru December 31st 2008, monitoring was carried out to determine if the quality of the drinking water met State and Federal Regulations. This is called compliance monitoring. The results in the table meet all drinking water regulations.

## Notice of Monitoring Violation

Monitoring Violation of the Surface Water Treatment Rule  
Federal and state regulations require continuous monitoring of the turbidities of filter effluents by automated instrumentation.

During the period of 11-17-08 through 12-01-08, due to a computer glitch, the turbidity of the effluent of one of 44 filters at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant was not recorded electronically. Operators did, however, manually record the turbidity of this filter every four hours.

In addition, continuous, automated monitoring of turbidity was performed on the combined effluent of all of the filters. All monitoring results showed that our drinking water met all turbidity standards. We are confident that the drinking water produced by the Carrollton Water Purification Plant was not affected by this instrumentation failure and that the water met all federal and state drinking water quality standards in 2008.

Federal regulations require that the following formulaic language accompany all public notices of monitoring violations, regardless of their severity:

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards. During the period of 11/17/08 through 12/1/08, we did not complete all monitoring for turbidity at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant, and therefore cannot be sure of the quality of your drinking water during that time. Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

Contaminant	Meets Requirements?	Unit	Amounts Detected		Highest Level Allowed (EPA MCL)	Ideal Goal (MCLG)	Likely Sources
			East Bank	West Bank			
<b>Total Coliform Bacteria</b>	<b>Yes</b>	% Positive Samples per Month	0 - 3.0	0 - 3.2	5	0	Naturally present in the environment
<b>Turbidity</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>Yes</b>	NTU	0.04 - 0.3	0.04 - 0.3	1.49 NTU for a single sample and	n/a	Soil runoff
		Lowest monthly % of samples with turbidities of 0.3 or less:	100 %	100 %	95 % or more samples each month should have 0.3 or less NTU		
<b>Fluoride</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppm	0.2 - 1.3	0.1 - 1.2	4	4	Water additive which promotes strong teeth erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
<b>Arsenic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppb	1	1	10	0	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
<b>Copper</b> (Data from 2007-8, latest survey)	<b>Yes</b>	Highest ppm:	0.9	0.1	Action Level = 1.3 for	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives.
		90th percentile:	0.2	0.1	90th percentile		
		No. of sites exceeding AL:	0	0			
<b>Lead</b> (Data from 2007-8, latest survey)	<b>Yes</b>	Highest ppb:	287	18	Action Level = 15 for	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits
		90th percentile:	20	5	90th percentile		
		No. of sites exceeding AL:	6	1			
<b>Nitrate + Nitrite (as Nitrogen)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppm	1.3	1.3	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits
<b>Total Residual Chlorine</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppm	0.0 - 4.9 Avg. = 3.0	0.8 - 5.2 Avg. = 3.6	Avg. of 4.0 (MRDL)	Avg. of 4 (MRDLG)	Disinfectant added during water treatment
<b>Total Organic Carbon (TOC) (Removal)</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>Yes</b>	(ratio)	0.8 - 2.1 Avg. = 1.0	0.6 - 1.8 Avg. = 1.1	Avg. must be at least 1.0	n/a	Naturally present in the environment
<b>Trihalomethanes, Total (TTHMs)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppb	15 - 36 Avg. = 30	12 - 35 Avg. = 20	Avg. of 80	n/a	By-product of drinking water disinfection
<b>Haloacetic Acids Total HAA5s</b>	<b>Yes</b>	ppb	0 - 28 Avg. = 19	17 - 34 Avg. = 22	Avg. of 60	n/a	By-product of drinking water disinfection
The following results are from investigative samples required by EPA Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (DBPR) and will be used to select monitoring locations for future compliance with the EPA Stage 2 D/DBPR.							
<b>Trihalomethanes, Total (TTHMs)</b>	Yes	ppb	14 - 35 Avg. = 23	11 - 40 Avg. = 20	Avg. of 80	n/a	By-product of drinking water disinfection
<b>Haloacetic Acids Total HAA5s</b>	Yes	ppb	0 - 36 Avg. = 18	7 - 43 Avg. = 23	Avg. of 60	n/a	By-product of drinking water disinfection

<sup>1</sup> 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. Its sources include soil runoff.

<sup>2</sup> TOC removal is reported here as the ratio of the actual TOC removal to that required by regulation.

Note: n/a = not applicable

Note: Monitoring of our tap water for Combined Radium, Asbestos, Nitrite, and Dioxin was not carried out due to federal waivers granted by USEPA for these specific contaminants only.

# Who Tests Your Water?

The State of Louisiana Dept. of Health and Hospitals tests for regulated contaminants to determine if New Orleans drinking water complies with State and Federal water quality regulations. Where a contaminant was detected in compliance monitoring, we have reported it in the table on the preceding pages. The remaining contaminants were not detected in the State's compliance monitoring in 2008. These include metals such as arsenic, and cadmium as well as pesticides such as chlordane and 2,4-d. The State also tests the water for unregulated contaminants and indicators of water quality.

The Sewerage and Water Board performs tests daily in its own Water Quality Laboratory. Bacteriological tests are performed as part of compliance monitoring. Most tests performed by the Sewerage and Water Board lab for chemical contaminants and other indicators of water quality are performed for quality control, and are not part of compliance monitoring.

Operators in the water treatment plants monitor for turbidity and total chlorine residual at prescribed intervals around the clock and the results are reported to the state monthly. The 2008 results of their turbidity monitoring are reported in the table on the preceding page.

## Is there lead in New Orleans' tap water?

No lead was present in the treated water leaving our treatment plants; however, our most recent round of lead testing found that some homes in New Orleans have elevated levels of lead in their tap 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. The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans 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 drinking 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 U.S. E.P.A. Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.



## Cryptosporidium

*Cryptosporidium parvum* is a microscopic organism which, if ingested, can possibly cause diarrhea, nausea, cramps, fever and other gastrointestinal symptoms. It is found in animal waste and sewage, which is washed into rivers and streams when it rains. *Cryptosporidium* can be found in nearly all surface waters in the United States. The best defense which a water utility can provide is an effective water treatment process which includes the multiple barriers of effective and continuous coagulation, disinfection and filtration.

In healthy persons, symptoms usually last two to three days. However, cryptosporidiosis can be very serious for people with severely weakened immune systems, such as chemotherapy and transplant patients and people with HIV infections. These people should consult a physician about extra protection, including boiling water, using a certified bottled water or using a home water filter capable of removing *Cryptosporidium*.

Even though it was not required at the time, the Sewerage and Water Board began monitoring its source water (the Mississippi River) and tap water for *Cryptosporidium* in March of 1993. During 1998, *Cryptosporidium* was detected in 1 of 12 monthly tap water samples, with the highest level being 0.1 oocysts per 100 liters, or 1 oocyst per 264 gallons. No *Cryptosporidium* was detected in tap water samples from 1999 through 2008. An occasional oocyst in the drinking water of utilities that use surface water is not unusual, and does not necessarily indicate a health problem.

Through its early voluntary *Cryptosporidium* monitoring, the completion of the mandatory Information Collection Rule monitoring, and use of continuous monitoring turbidimeters in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Sewerage and Water Board is providing ever greater assurance of safe drinking water.

## Checking for Spills on the River

The Sewerage and Water Board participates in a program set up by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) called the Early Warning Organic Compound Detection System (EWOCDS). DEQ has provided equipment at locations along the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to check for volatile organic contaminants in the river water.

The New Orleans location is the Sewerage and Water Board Water Quality Laboratory. Lab personnel check river water samples each day and report any contamination to DEQ. The S&WB in turn benefits from advance notification of spills provided by personnel at upriver EWOCDS locations.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Why is my water milky white at times? Will cloudy water make me sick?** Tiny air bubbles can cause water to appear cloudy. As the water sits, the bubbles rise to the top and the water will look clear again. Starting in October and November, when the water starts to get cold, there may be many cases of cloudy water. Cloudy water that is due to air in the water will not make you sick.

**Do we have hard water? What is the hardness of our water?** Yes, New Orleans tap water is considered hard water. Some believe that the term arises from the fact that it is difficult or "hard" to make suds or a lather with soap in hard water. Others say that "hardness" is associated with the fact that it is "hard" to remove the soap ring from the bathtub. Hard water is caused primarily by two harmless minerals—calcium and magnesium. The total hardness is the sum of the two expressed as milligrams per liter (mg/L) of calcium carbonate or grains/gallon of calcium carbonate. In 2008, the average total hardness in tap water was 175 mg/L on the East Bank, and 133 mg/L on the West Bank. For comparison, in terms of mg/L of calcium carbonate, soft water ranges from 0 to 75, moderately hard water from 75 to 150, hard water from 150 to 300, and water above 300 is considered very hard.

continued from cover

Periodic refurbishing of processing basins, an integral part water purification, is necessary to increase their mechanical integrity and longevity. Basins remove sediment from water as it moves through the process.

One basin on the East Bank was recently put back into service after improvements done by a private contractor. Renovation of another basin is underway, with the work being done by the Board's Facility Maintenance Department with support from many other departments.

Doing the work in-house is expected to result in substantial cost savings for the Board. The basins are located at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant.

At the West Bank plant in Algiers, the Board's investment went to new systems, upgrades of others and routine maintenance.

A new \$2 million Klorigen Unit is now in operation at the Algiers Water Treatment Plant.

The unit produces chlorine disinfectant on demand for the water treatment process by using food-grade salt and electricity.

The driving force for using this system is risk reduction by eliminating the need to store tons of liquid chlorine onsite, which could release to the atmosphere.

During 2008, The Sewerage and Water Board went into full emergency mode when a tugboat rammed a tanker causing it to discharge 165,000 gallons of oil into the Mississippi River near the Board's two water intakes for the Algiers Water Treatment Plant.

Quick reaction, ingenuity, expertise and knowledge of the plant by Board employees contained the oil in the plant and kept it from entering the distribution system. The plant operated on its reserve supply while emergency procedures were completed.

The public was kept informed of the situation through the news media.

Much work also took place outside the plants in the distribution system. Since Katrina and through the end of 2008, 61,043 water main leaks, house service leaks, hydrant leaks, valve jobs and meter related repairs were made.

Also, 13,116 fire hydrants (damaged by flood waters on the East Bank) were inspected for pressure, lubricated and painted. Corroded anti-theft devices which prevent water from being stolen were replaced on the hydrants.

Some 7,224 paving jobs related to the repair of leaks were completed.

The Board is also using Smartball, a system that detects hidden water leaks, and Data Logger, a system which tracks consumption to greatly reduce wasted water. Both help reduce costs and improve the integrity of the water distribution system.

In the Ninth Ward alone, these techniques reduced lost water from 20 million gallons a day to 8 million gallons a day, resulting in a great cost savings in the months following Katrina.

Many more improvements throughout the water system are needed and the men and women of the Sewerage and Water Board are prepared to be a part of this massive restoration process.

The Board is pleased to report that its high quality drinking water meets all federal and state requirements.

As you review this annual report on New Orleans' water, you will see that a dedicated group of Board members, managers, engineers, scientists, technicians, operators, machinists, electricians and maintenance crews are working hard to ensure that the highest quality product is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Since 1998, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires all water utilities to produce and distribute annual water quality reports. This eleventh report includes testing results for the year 2008. We hope that you will find this Consumer Confidence Report interesting and informative.

We want you—our valued customers—to be well informed about all aspects of your water system and we encourage you to see the "For More Information" section at the end of this report.

# 2008 quality WATER

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans



## Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

625 St. Joseph Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70165

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**Marcia A. St. Martin**  
Executive Director

**Joseph R. Becker**  
General Superintendent

## Conclusion

We are confident that a review of this report will help you better understand your water system and the complete dedication of the Sewerage and Water Board members and staff to provide the highest quality water for its customers—the citizens of New Orleans. After all, the Board members and employees are customers too. We are proud of our water, which is often judged the “Best Tasting” in competition with other water from cities throughout the United States. Taste is important, but equally important are the other water quality parameters described in this report. The Sewerage and Water Board will continue to produce high quality water through the use of proven treatment processes, as well as modern technology. **We are pleased to be able to report that your drinking water met or surpassed all federal and state drinking water quality standards in 2008.**

**About the cover photo:** Periodic refurbishing of processing basins, an integral part of water purification, is necessary to increase their mechanical integrity and longevity. Basins remove sediment from water as it moves through the process. The basin on the left was recently put back into service after improvements were made by a private contractor. Renovation of the basin on the right is underway, with the work being done by the Board’s Facility Maintenance Department with support from many other departments. Doing the work in-house is expected to result in substantial cost savings for the Board. The basins are located at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

Laboratory: (504) 865-0420

Emergency Department: (504) 52-WATER (529-2837)

E-mail address: [waterinfo@swbno.org](mailto:waterinfo@swbno.org)

Internet Home Page: [www.swbnola.org](http://www.swbnola.org)

More information can be obtained at Sewerage and Water Board meetings which are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at 625 St. Joseph Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70165.

U.S. E.P.A. Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791

U.S. E.P.A. Drinking Water Internet Home Page: [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwhealth.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwhealth.html)

\*Estimated population figures provided by GCR & Associates.

## Drinking water

is one of the essential ingredients for life.

We at the Sewerage and Water Board of New

Orleans are committed to supplying safe drinking

water of a quality that

surpasses the requirements

of State and Federal

Regulations.



“RE-BUILDING THE CITY’S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY”

# Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

C. RAY NAGIN, *President*  
TOMMIE A. VASSEL, *President Pro-Tem*

625 ST. JOSEPH STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70165 • 504-529-2837 OR 52W-ATER  
www.swbnola.org

September 2009

To: Sewerage & Water Board Customers

Re: “Quality Water 2008” Report Update – Final Results of Lead Survey

When our “Quality Water 2008” report was released in June of 2009, we had not yet completed the final review of the data from our lead sampling survey. A comprehensive review of the data led to the discovery that several of the sample sites may not have been representative of the water system at the time of sampling. After consulting with our regulators from the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals Office of Public Health (DHH-OPH), these sites were sampled again, and the results of the second sampling were used by DHH-OPH to determine the final outcome of the lead survey. The table below represents the final results of this lead survey and replaces the information on lead in the table on pages 4-5 of the original “Quality Water 2008” report.

<u>Contaminant</u>	<u>Meets Requirements?</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Amounts Detected</u>		<u>Highest Level Allowed (EPA MCL)</u>	<u>Ideal Goal (MCLG)</u>	<u>Likely Sources</u>
			<u>East Bank</u>	<u>West Bank</u>			
<b>Lead</b> (Data from 2007-8, latest survey)	<b>Yes</b>	Highest ppb:	31	18	Action Level = 15 for 90th percentile	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits
		90th percentile:	14	5			
		No. of sites exceeding AL:	4	1			

The results of this lead survey led indicate that homes that are unoccupied and homes that are undergoing or have recently undergone plumbing renovations might experience elevated lead concentrations in their tap water. Since many homes in the city meet this criteria due to extensive damage from hurricane Katrina, the S&WB and DHH-OPH agreed that an effort should be made to educate consumers of this possibility and how best to minimize their exposure. This will be accomplished by direct mailing in the form of bill stuffers, and by posting this information on the S&WB Internet site. A copy of the bill stuffer follows this letter.

## LEAD IN DRINKING WATER - INFORMATION

To All S&WB Customers and Consumers,

As part of our drinking water monitoring program, the S&WB and La. Dept. of Health & Hospitals collect and analyze tap water samples every three years for lead in the drinking water. The results of our first post-Katrina lead sampling survey indicate that:

- ❖ **Homes that are unoccupied and homes that are undergoing or have recently undergone plumbing renovation may experience elevated lead concentrations in their tap water. Homeowners should thoroughly flush all household plumbing before re-occupying the property.**

Testing showed that no lead was present in the water leaving the treatment plants. However, lead can enter the drinking water from the corrosion of materials and components used in service connections and in customers' own plumbing.

- ❖ If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. When your water has been sitting for several hours unused, **you can minimize the potential for exposure to lead from the drinking water by routinely running your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes, or until you feel a temperature change in the water before using water for cooking or drinking.**

More information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure to lead is available from the U.S. E.P.A. Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>. Recent testing data is available at <http://www.swbno.org/>.

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