

Why Should You Test the Water?

Since many contaminants are colorless and odorless, you should test your water to know it is safe, especially since children are more vulnerable to the effects of poor water quality.

Well water originates as rain and snow that seeps into the ground. As it passes through the soil, the water can become contaminated. Some contaminants are naturally occurring in the rocks and soils, like bacteria, radon, arsenic, uranium, and other minerals. Other contaminants find their way into groundwater from human activities. Still others, like the metal lead, can come from plumbing.

How to Test Your Water

Laboratories can test your water. In most cases, the laboratory can arrange to collect your water samples. You can also obtain the necessary bottles and collect your own samples. It is important that you understand the sampling process in order to get useful and accurate results.

MassDEP recommends using a state certified laboratory- and your local Board of Health may require it.

Drinking Water Guidance

This MassDEP guidance is intended to assist early education and care facilities (EECFs) in MA with compliance of drinking water standards recommended for licensing or re-licensing. It applies to EECFs that serve less than 25 people and get their water from a private well, not a public water system (PWS).



Drinking Water Guidance for Early Education and Care Facilities with Private Wells in Massachusetts



Recommended Testing*

Contaminants	Testing Frequency*
Coliform Bacteria Nitrate/Nitrite	Monitor initially and then at a minimum once every year.
Arsenic Chloride Fluoride Hardness Iron Manganese pH Radon Sodium VOCs SOCs	Monitor initially and then at a minimum once every ten years.
Lead Copper	Monitor initially and then at a minimum once every three years or when there are plumbing changes.
Gross Alpha Screen (bedrock wells only)	Test only if you have a bedrock well. Monitor initially and then at a minimum once every ten years.
Unregulated Contaminants	Recommended once every ten years. See MassDEP website for more information.
<p>*Contact your local Board of Health for further testing requirements*</p> <p>To find your local Board of Health see https://mhoa.com/municipal-links/</p>	

“Remember to use only cold, fresh water to prepare food and beverages”

Run the water first thing in the morning or after periods of low or no flow to flush and clear out water that has been standing in the plumbing overnight. See Flushing information at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/lead-and-copper-best-practices/download>.

Understanding the Results

Results will reveal the level at which the tested substances were found in your water. The presence of a contaminant does not necessarily mean that the water is unsafe. However, when contaminant levels exceed state or federal health standards, you may need to take steps to correct the situation. Several methods are available to remove the contaminants. The laboratory, local Board of Health, or MassDEP can provide assistance in understanding your results. In addition, the US EPA has an online water quality tool.



Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Resources
Drinking Water Program

What Is the Recommended Testing Schedule?

The recommended testing schedule is shown in the Table.

Contact your local Board of Health for further testing requirements* To find your local Board of Health see <https://mhoa.com/municipal-links/>

Online Resources

- Massachusetts Private Well Information
www.mass.gov/private-wells
- US EPA “Be Well Informed” online tool for understanding water testing results
<https://e-enterprise.gov/workbench>