



Athens-Clarke County

# 2024 Water Quality Report

*Your water is safe to drink right out of the faucet.*

This publication contains important information on the quality of your drinking water. It includes all data required by the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act and fulfills the requirement that all water systems distribute an annual Water Quality Report to our water customers.

**¿Habla español?** Este Informe contiene información muy importante acerca de su agua potable. Por favor tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

**WATER SYSTEM #0590000  
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT**

706-613-3729

[www.accgov.com/CCR](http://www.accgov.com/CCR)

I'm pleased to share this year's Drinking Water Quality Report, also known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), which details test results our team conducted throughout 2024 on Athens-Clarke County's (ACC) drinking water. Within the report, you'll see the standards we meet and the ongoing efforts we take to ensure your water is of the highest quality.

From the moment our source water flows into the J.G. Beacham Water Treatment Plant, our dedicated team carefully monitors each step of the treatment process. I am proud to say that your drinking water meets or exceeds all state and federal drinking water standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

These results reflect the hard work and dedication of our highly trained operators, maintenance mechanics, lab technicians, and distribution crews who keep the system running efficiently 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From source to tap, their knowledge, determination, and passion for public service ensure that your water remains clean, reliable, and responsibly managed.

In 2024, one of the J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment Plant operators received the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) Top Operator Award for District 2. He received this recognition for being a moving force in the field and spreading the knowledge of operations to others.

Additionally, the J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment plant received the GAWP Gold Award for achieving 100% compliance



**“We are proud to deliver water that not only meets strict safety standards, but also reflects our deep commitment to public health and environmental stewardship.”**

with all state permits and water quality regulations for the entire calendar year, further showing our commitment to operational excellence and public health.

The Water Conservation Office (WCO) is nationally recognized for their water conservation education and outreach efforts. In 2024, the WCO earned its eighth EPA WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for helping consumers and businesses save water, energy, and money by promoting water-efficient products and programs.

I encourage you to review this report, which includes important information about our water sources, the treatment process, and the results of our regular monitoring and testing. The Public Utilities Department (PUD) will continue to prioritize the health and safety of our community by delivering safe, high-quality drinking water to homes, schools, and businesses. If you have any questions as you review the report, please contact our department at 706-613-3729 or email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com).

*Hollis Terry IV* Director of Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department

In 2024...

**5,161,530,000**  
gallons of water were delivered

**230**

Athens-Clarke County  
Public Utilities  
Department employees  
are **hard at work** to  
protect your water  
quality

**260** tests performed each day  
**95,000** tests performed during the year  
AT WATER PLANT DURING TREATMENT PROCESS

**36** average weekday tests

**787** average monthly tests

**9,449** total annual tests

CONDUCTED BY ACC STAFF ON TREATED WATER

Additional samples were sent to private labs and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

## 2024 AWARDS

Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) awarded the **J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment Plant**:

- **Best Operated Plant of the Year Award** (Surface Water, 25–49.99 Million Gallons per Day Category)
- **Top Operator Award**
- **Gold Award for 100% Compliance**

Water Conservation Office:

- **EPA WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award** (for the 8th Time)
- **GAWP Program Education of Excellence Award**
- **GAWP CCR Award** (Large Surface Water Category)

# Where does your water come from?

Before reaching your faucet, your water travels through a carefully monitored, **reliable treatment process**.

A lot happens behind the scenes before you turn on your tap. Here's a step-by-step look at your water's journey to your tap:

## 1. COLLECTION

Water is pumped from one of our three sources—Bear Creek Reservoir, North Oconee River, or Middle Oconee River—into the J.G. Beacham Water Treatment Plant.



## 2. COAGULATION & FLOCCULATION

Specialized chemicals are added to the water to bind tiny particles together. These form larger clumps known as "floc."



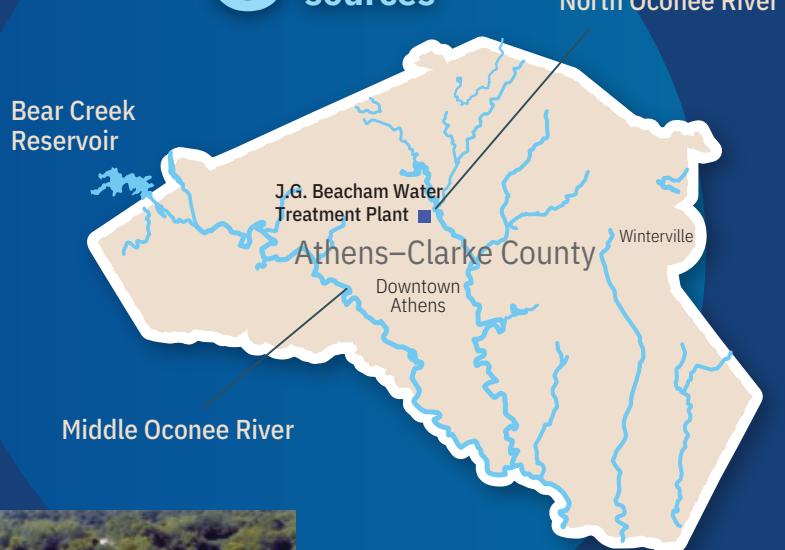
## 3. SEDIMENTATION

Floc is heavier than water, so it settles to the bottom of the basin and is removed.

## 4. FILTRATION

The water is passed through filters that trap any remaining fine particles, resulting in crystal-clear water!

Your drinking water  
comes from  
**3 surface  
water  
sources**



## 5. DISINFECTION

The treated water is held in a tank called a clear well. Here, chlorine that has been added continues to disinfect, ensuring there are no harmful organisms.

## 6. STORAGE & DELIVERY

The treated water is stored in large tanks before being distributed to homes, schools, businesses, and organizations across Athens-Clarke County.



Find the faucet icon hidden in this water quality report and enter by July 31, 2025 to win a bucket of water gifts! Tell us at [accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout](http://accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout)



## Safeguarding our rivers

In order to protect public drinking water supplies at the source, the State of Georgia established a Source Water Assessment Program. As part of this program, Athens-Clarke County and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission completed a Source Water Assessment of the Middle Oconee and North Oconee rivers. Both rivers have been ranked with a medium level of pollution susceptibility.

Based on the results of the Source Water Assessment, the county developed a Watershed Protection Plan for safeguarding our water resources. Copies of the report and plan are available at the Public Utilities Department Administration Office, 124 East Hancock Avenue in downtown Athens.

If you have questions about water quality or want to find out how to help safeguard our source water, email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com).

Athens-Clarke County's three drinking water sources are the Bear Creek Reservoir (upper left), Middle Oconee River (middle), and North Oconee River (upper right).

[ThinkAtTheSink.com](#)

## Why are there contaminants in water?

Pure water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. However, all drinking water comes from rivers, lakes, reservoirs, or wells. These sources are never purely hydrogen and oxygen. As water travels over land or through the ground, it dissolves natural minerals, and is subject to potential "contamination" by a variety of naturally occurring and man-made substances.

To ensure that our tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Water Test Results in this report detail the EPA's ideal goal and highest level allowed.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general public. Immuno-compromised individuals, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

EPA and Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available by contacting the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or on EPA's website [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater).

[Safe Drinking Water Hotline \(1-800-426-4791\)](#)

We test for over **190 substances**. This Water Quality Report Summary shows only what we found in the water after treatment. **If it isn't listed in these test results, we didn't find it.**

Commonly known toxic substances tested for and **NOT FOUND** in your drinking water:

• arsenic	• cyanide	• radium
• barium	• giardia lamblia	• selenium
• cadmium	• legionella	• thallium
• cryptosporidium	• mercury	• uranium

## PFAS CHEMICALS

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are long lasting chemicals used worldwide in industry and consumer products. Known as “forever chemicals,” PFAS break down very slowly in the environment and can dissolve in water. PFAS have been found in water, air, fish, and soil at locations around the globe. Studies link some PFAS to harmful health effects. The ACC PUD participated in a Georgia Environmental Protection Division monitoring project and found that all regulated and unregulated PFAS have been below EPA recommended guidelines and/or MCLs. The ACC PUD continues to invest in testing and participate in monitoring projects to ensure we stay below the EPA recommended guidelines and/or MCLs. The ACC PUD is committed to providing safe drinking water and will update our findings in regards to PFAS at [acgov.com/10543/PFAS](http://acgov.com/10543/PFAS).



## SERVICE LINE INVENTORY

The Service Line Inventory is a requirement under the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions to help water systems identify and replace lead service lines. It mandates that all water systems develop and maintain an inventory of service line materials to assess the presence of lead and protect public health. The inventory will support proactive lead reduction efforts and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements to minimize lead exposure in drinking water. The PUD has been working since 2021 to identify over 42,000 service lines based on historical records, field verifications, and predictive modeling. The PUD inventory process indicates that there are no lead service lines in the system. All the service lines are non-lead. To access the Service Line Inventory for Athens-Clarke County (GA #0590000), visit [acgov.com/waterservicelines](http://acgov.com/waterservicelines).

The PUD inventory process indicates there are no lead service lines.



# Important health information from the EPA

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 contacting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791) or visiting the website [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater).

Lead can cause serious health effects in people of all ages, especially pregnant people, infants (both formula-fed and breastfed), and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and parts used in service lines and in home plumbing. ACC Public Utilities Department is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in the plumbing in your home. Because lead levels may vary over time, lead exposure is possible even when your tap sampling results do not detect lead at one point in time. You can help protect yourself and your family by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Using a filter, certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead, is effective in reducing lead exposures. Follow the instructions provided with the filter to ensure the filter is used properly. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water. Before using tap water for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula, flush your pipes for several minutes. You can do this by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. If you have a lead service line or galvanized requiring replacement service line, you may need to flush your pipes for a longer period. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact ACC Public Utilities at 706-613-3729.

Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://epa.gov/safewater/lead).

[epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://epa.gov/safewater/lead)



## Understanding measurements and terms

### TERMS TO KNOW

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

**CONTAMINANT** Any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in water.

**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.

**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.

**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 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 contamination.

**ND** Not detected.

**NTU (NEPHELOMETRIC TURBIDITY UNIT)** is a measurement of the clarity of the water.

**TT (TREATMENT TECHNIQUE)**

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**TURBIDITY (cloudiness of water)** has no health effects, but we measure turbidity because it can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth.

### UNDERSTANDING MEASUREMENTS



**1 Part Per Million (ppm)**  
= 1 drop in 13.2 gallons of water

Or, in terms of time, ppm can be thought of as one second in 11.5 days



**1 Part Per Billion (ppb)**  
= 1 drop in a tanker truck

Or, one second in 32 years

# 2024 Water Test Results

Results of Athens-Clarke County's Public Utilities Department tests of treated water shown in comparison to EPA standards.

Substance/ Analyte	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Detected Level (what we found)	Meets EPA Standard
Fluoride	Water additive that promotes strong teeth	4.00 ppm	4.00 ppm	Max 1.28 ppm Average 0.69 ppm Actual range 0.47–1.28 ppm	✓
Nitrate (Nitrogen)	Runoff from fertilizer use	10.00 ppm	10.00 ppm	0.37 ppm	✓
Haloacetic Acids	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	0.00 ppb	60.00 ppb (annual average)	30.70 ppb* Detected range 0.00–50.50 ppb	✓
Filtered Turbidity	Soil runoff	0.00 NTU	TT = 1.00 NTU  TT = 95% of samples ≤ 0.30 NTU	0.13 (highest single measurement)  100.00% ≤ 0.30 NTU	✓
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)	By-product of drinking water chlorination	0.00 ppb	80.00 ppb* (annual average)	42.97 ppb* Detected range 0.00–83.60 ppb	✓

\*System-wide running annual average.

Substance/ Analyte	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MRDLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MDRL)	Detected Level (what we found)	Meets EPA Standard
Chlorine	Water additive for disinfection	4.00 ppm (MRDLG)	4.00 ppm (MRDL)	Max 1.99 ppm Average 0.93 ppm	✓

Substance/ Analyte	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Range of Removal	Annual Average Removal	Meets EPA Standard
Total Organic Carbon	Naturally present in the environment	N/A	TT	1.00–1.36 ppm 35.00%–47.62%	1.16 ppm 40.46%	✓

Substance/ Analyte	Date Sampled	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MCLG)	EPA Action Level (AL)	Range	Detected Level (90th Percentile)	Violation	Meets EPA Standard
Copper	7/29/24 through 9/12/24	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	1.30 ppm	1.30 ppm	0.0048–0.38 ppm Low High	0.086 ppm 0 samples over AL	No	✓
Lead	7/29/24 through 9/12/24	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	0.00 ppb	15.00 ppb	0.00–21.00 ppb Low High	3.50 ppb 2 samples over AL	No	✓

Every three years, Athens-Clarke County is required to test at least 50 homes in the community for lead and copper. Compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule occurs when the 90th percentile of all samples collected does not exceed the lead and copper EPA action level.

To access all individual Lead Tap Sample results for Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department, please contact Daphne Little at 762-400-7917 or Daphne.Little@accgov.com.

# Summary of 2024 Water Test Results

## Copper

Amount we found <b>0.086 ppm</b>	0 over AL	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 1.30 ppm
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Corrosion of household plumbing systems

## Lead

Amount we found <b>3.50 ppb</b>	2 over AL	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 15.0 ppb
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Corrosion of household plumbing systems

EPA regulations require testing of at least 50 homes for lead and copper every three years. Copper and lead were sampled from ACC homes July 29, 2024–September 12, 2024.

To access all individual Lead Tap Sample results for Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department, please contact Daphne Little at 762-400-7917 or Daphne.Little@accgov.com.

## Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)

Amount we found <b>42.97 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 80.0 ppb*
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
By-product of drinking water disinfection

## Chlorine

Amount we found <b>max 1.99 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
By-product of drinking water disinfection

## Haloacetic Acids

Amount we found <b>30.70 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 60.0 ppb*
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Corrosion of household plumbing systems

\*System-wide running annual average.

## Fluoride

Amount we found <b>max 1.28 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Water additive that promotes strong teeth

The State of Georgia requires fluoridation of our water supplies. We add fluoride during water treatment at 0.7 ppm, the level recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service and Georgia Rural Water Association.

## Filtered Turbidity

Amount we found <b>0.13 NTU</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT = 1 NTU TT = 95% of samples $\leq$ 0.3 NTU
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:** Soil runoff

## Nitrate (Nitrogen)

Amount we found <b>0.37 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 10.0 ppm
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Runoff from fertilizer use

## Total Organic Carbon

Annual average removal <b>1.16 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT
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 Meets EPA Standards

**How it gets into the water:**  
Naturally present in the environment

## CONTACT

Jackie Sherry  
706-613-3729  
savewater@accgov.com

[epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water](http://epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water)

# WAYS TO BE Water Wise!

save water & money  
when you enroll in  
**watersmart**  
[acgov.com/WaterSmart](http://acgov.com/WaterSmart)

The PUD website is flush with water saving resources.

Do a household water assessment, find tips for leak detection,  
and more at [ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com).

showers can use up to  
50% less  
water than baths

use a low flow  
showerhead  
+ look for WaterSense  
labeled products



use trees & shade  
to keep areas cool



Choose water-wise  
**H2gr0w**  
plants

Visit [acgov.com/h2grow](http://acgov.com/h2grow)



avoid fertilizers  
& pesticides  
which can pollute our water

use *drip irrigation*  
and only water soil that is dry

keep mulch at least  
3 inches  
deep

water  
infrequently  
but deeply  
(4-6 inches)

## more ways to protect your water

- Never pour hazardous waste down drains or on the ground.
- Dispose of your medications properly – visit [acgov.com/6344/What-should-I-do-with-old-prescriptions](http://acgov.com/6344/What-should-I-do-with-old-prescriptions)
- Always pick up after your dog.
- Never sweep litter or debris into a storm drain.
- Put fats, oils, and grease into the trash not the drain.

[ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com)



Attended or hosted **68 community events** reaching **5,326 adults** and **3,742 kids!**



Gave **84 tours** for **735 adults** and **710 kids**



Hosted **6 presentations** to **148 adults**



## Making a Splash in our community!

2024 was another busy year! The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Public Utilities Water Conservation Office staff organized and participated in events, tours, and lessons reaching more than **15,000 ACC residents!**

Water-saving giveaways made an impact, saving thousands of gallons! ACC residents were given:

**4,430 toilet tablets** (for detecting leaks)  
**373 bathroom aerators** • **222 kitchen aerators**  
**340 spray nozzles** • **396 moisture meters**  
**391 showerheads**



Led **28 camp lessons** reaching **87 adults** and **458 kids**



Hosted **6 workshops** for **127 adults**



Made **224 classroom visits** reaching **334 adults** and **4,140 kids**



Save the  
date!

The Athens Water Festival will be September 6, 2025, [AthensWaterFestival.com](http://AthensWaterFestival.com). See more events at [ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com)

Get involved! To volunteer at the Athens Water Festival or with Rivers Alive, please contact [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com).



## Public Utilities

124 East Hancock Ave.  
Athens, Georgia 30601



**Water Bill Questions**  
706-613-3500

**Administration**  
706-613-3470

**Water Conservation**  
706-613-3729

**To Report a Water Leak**  
706-613-3495

**Emergencies**  
706-613-3481



**ENTER TO WIN!** Find the faucet icon hidden in this water quality report and enter to win a bucket of water gifts! Tell us at [accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout](http://accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout). Entries are accepted until July 31, 2025.

[accgov.com/publicutilities](http://accgov.com/publicutilities)  
[ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com)



### LEARN MORE

All PUD records are available to the public. Commission meetings, where all major water and wastewater projects are reviewed and approved, are open to the public and televised on ACTV Cable Channel 180. For more details, visit: [accgov.com](http://accgov.com).

### FOLLOW US

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Jackie Sherry at 706-613-3729
- Email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com)
- Visit [epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water](http://epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water)