

Tammany Utilities

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do when I have a problem with the quality of my water?

You may call our office at (985) 276-6400. Our normal business hours are 8 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. You may also call this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency assistance.

How do I know my water is safe to consume?

Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals (LADHH) requires these tests on all public groundwater systems:

Total Coliform Bacteria: Samples are submitted by Tammany Utilities to the LADHH on a monthly basis. Coliform bacteria are used as indicator organisms in water analyses and their presence indicates a potential health risk. This bacteria is common in animals, plants and soils. The most common of these bacteria, E. coli, is found in the fecal material of humans and other warm blooded animals. People with immune system deficiencies and infants are at highest risk for disease associated with this type of bacteria. In the event of a positive water sample, the system is disinfected and sampled again. Subsequent positive samples upon resampling will prompt Tammany Utilities to mail a letter to your home informing you of the potential presence of bacteria in your water. This is mandated under Federal law regulations as a right to know policy for the consumer. Your water system's sample results are included in the Consumer Confidence Report.

Disinfectant Byproduct Sampling: These samples are taken by Tammany Utilities biannually or quarterly, depending on the water system population. Water samples are analyzed by a certified laboratory and results are sent to LADHH. Disinfection Byproducts are caused by disinfectants (in this case chlorine) reacting with natural organic and inorganic matter in the drinking water. Two groups of disinfectant byproducts are tested: Trihalomethanes (THMs) and Haloacetic Acids (HAAs). There are nervous system and cancer risks associated with disinfectant byproducts and that is why this rule was implemented in 2004.

Lead (Pb) & Copper (Cu) Rule: These samples are taken by the homeowner every three years and Tammany Utilities submits them to LADHH. Residences are chosen by Tammany Utilities and approved by LADHH. In order for the Lead & Copper tests to be conclusive; the sample sites (addresses) must remain the same. The number of sample

sites depends on the population served by the water system. Drinking water can sometimes be corrosive to household plumbing and may cause lead & copper pipes to disintegrate over a long period of time. Water that contains traces of lead and copper has potential health effects. Exposure to lead can cause brain and kidney damage, as well as affect red blood cells. Pregnant women and young children are of highest risk. Copper causes kidney and liver damage, along with gastrointestinal problems. The results of your water system's lead and copper testing can be obtained from Tammany Utilities.

Arsenic Rule: Tammany Utilities is proactively sampling for arsenic even though this mandatory rule does not go into effect until 2006. All of our investigative samples show Tammany Utilities water systems to contain non-detected amounts of arsenic.

Why is my water discolored?

Well water from the ground contains secondary contaminants that are no threat for consumption but may discolor the water. There are high levels of minerals present in the groundwater in this area of the country.

Iron and manganese may cause a rust color or black particles. Manganese, a nontoxic substance frequently occurs in nature, dissolves in groundwater and is colorless. When it combines with chlorine in the water as it comes to your home it turns black. You may want to consider using a filter to remove manganese from the water in your home.

Copper pipes or a low pH may cause your water to appear blue-green or leave blue-green stains on tubs, toilets, sinks, etc. Also, if your water is a milky color, there may be air in your lines. The water will clear if you let it sit for a while.

Another reason you could experience "tea" colored water is when a hydrant is used, or there is a line break. These situations usually create pockets of discoloration that can be cleared by running your water for 2-3 minutes. If the water does not clear, please call our office.

****Usage of a fire hydrant is by Tammany Utilities authorization only.**** If you ever see someone other than the fire department using a hydrant near your home, please call our office immediately to report the unauthorized user.

A helpful tip in improving your water quality is to flush your hot water heater. Tammany Utilities recommends the website www.diynetwork.com. In the search window, type "water heater maintenance". Easy instructions with pictures will appear.

Why does my water smell like sulfur or rotten eggs?

Hydrogen Sulfide is nontoxic and is dissolved in groundwater. It can cause your water to have that sulfur or rotten egg smell. Many times if a house is vacant for an extended period of time, the smell will be much stronger. The water must be allowed to flow in order to clear the water that has been in your pipes for all that time. To reduce the smell

in your drinking water, you can pour water into a pitcher. Let the water sit for a while, and the smell will dissipate. You may also wish to consider home treatment equipment that removes hydrogen sulfide.

What should I do about stained fixtures, clothes, etc.?

Non-bleach products such as white vinegar and baking soda help to clean mineral deposits. Tammany Utilities water quality servicemen also carry a rust remover that can be used for removing stains from tubs, sinks, toilets, and clothing. This product is complimentary. Please let us know if you have noticed any staining.

What does the phrase “Flushing the System” mean?

When Tammany Utilities says they will be “Flushing the System,” it refers to the process of opening the water valves and hydrants of the water system to allow water to flow through and scour the pipes. Flushing is performed by the Tammany Utilities water servicemen. Typically, flushing takes place when minerals or sediment deposited in the pipe have caused discoloration of the water. We do not recommend washing clothes during flushing events.

Should I buy a home water filtration system?

Tammany Utilities provides water which is in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act; however if you are concerned about the aesthetic quality of your water like taste, odor, or chlorine you might want to consider a home treatment unit. Tammany Utilities does not recommend a filtration system one way or the other, as it is the homeowner’s personal decision. You should investigate any potential treatment units through these organizations, as they are nationally recognized authorities on water treatment home systems.

Water Quality Association- <http://www.wqa.org/goldseal>

WQA phone # 800-749-0234

NSF International- <http://nsf.org/Certified/DWTU>

NSF#800-673-8010

Where does my drinking water come from?

All of Tammany Utilities’ water systems obtain water from wells drilled into the ground. Water is recovered from underground aquifers. From the ground, water is disinfected and pumped into a storage tank. The water is distributed through a series of pipes into your home.

Does Tammany Utilities test homeowner’s private wells?

No, Tammany Utilities is a water and sewerage provider. We do not service private wells. For more information on testing private wells, contact the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals St. Tammany Parish office at (985) 893-6296.

Is there fluoride in the water?

No, Tammany Utilities does not treat the water with fluoride. There is a very minimal amount of fluoride that naturally occurs in the groundwater.

What is the difference between a boil order and a boil advisory?

A boil order is implemented when contaminate levels have been exceeded. The water must be boiled rapidly for one whole minute in order to assure safe drinking water.

A boil advisory is a precautionary notification when contaminate levels are feared to have been exceeded. The water should be boiled in case of suspected bacteria.

How should I treat the water if I have an aquarium?

All of Tammany Utilities' water systems are treated with chlorine that may have a negative effect on the gills of fish. The chlorine will dissipate if the water is allowed to sit in an open bucket or fish tank for 24 hours or more. Conditioners can also be used to dissolve the chlorine; they are available from your local pet/fish retail store.

For related information, please visit these websites:

Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals – www.dhh.state.la.us

Environmental Protection Agency – www.epa.gov

Department of Natural Resources – www.dnr.louisiana.gov

U.S. Geological Survey – www.usgs.gov

H2ouse Water Saver Home – www.h2ouse.org