

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the hardness of the water? How does that compare with other water?

A. The hardness of the water is normally between 25 to 35 mg/l (milligrams per liter) or ppm (parts per million). Various levels of hardness in terms of calcium carbonate can be described as follows:

Extremely soft to soft	0-45 mg/l
Soft to moderately hard	46-90 mg/l
Moderately hard to hard	91-130 mg/l
Hard to very hard	131-170 mg/l
Very hard to excessively hard	171-250 mg/l
Too hard for ordinary domestic use over	250 mg/l

Note: Most manufacturers of dishwashers maintain that after about 120 mg/l of hardness that some means of softening or removal of hardness should be used to insure no spotting of the dishes.

Q. How do I know that the water is safe to drink?

A. We perform many tests of the water to insure that it meets all of the State and Federal standards. These tests are performed hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly from the source waters, the in-plant water and throughout the distribution system. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call us.

Q. Where do we obtain our water? How much is produced daily? Do we have any reserves?

A. About 85 percent of the potable water in the Lewiston system comes from the Clearwater River. It is then treated in a conventional water treatment plant. This consists of clarifying the raw or river water by adding chemicals that coagulate the impurities and then these are settled in a basin. Finally, the water is passed through a mixed media filter. Sodium Hypochlorite is added for disinfection and to maintain a residual in the distribution system. Fluoride is added to the water as an aid to dental decay. The pH is adjusted to be more neutral to prevent mineral depletion from piping.

The remainder of our water comes from wells. Lewiston has six wells. Three are used primarily for irrigation of parks, the cemetery, and a golf course. Three are utilized for domestic needs.

The average daily production annually is 4.1 million gallons per day (mgd). This may peak in the summer months to about 7.5-8.5 mgd. The average flow in the winter months is about 1.5 mgd.

Our system contains six reservoirs and two clear wells that have a capacity of about fifteen million gallons. This is in reserve on a continual basis for domestic, commercial and fire flow use as each day the reservoirs are filled.

Q. My water is discolored. Why is it brownish in color? Why is it whitish color?

A. A brownish tint in your water could be caused by several things but is normally attributed to iron in the water. This normally comes from the piping within the building as from old galvanized lines.

A white or milky color in the water would normally be caused by a release of oxygen in the water after it is drawn from the faucet. To determine this, draw a glass of water and let it set for a few minutes. Watch to see if the color slowly disappears from the bottom to the top.

Should you have any problems associated with color, please call us. We will be glad to investigate any problem and attempt to determine a solution.

Q. Do you add fluoride to the water? Why? How much do you add? Why?

A. Lewiston presently adds fluoride to the finished water before it enters the distribution system and has done so for many years. The fluoride level is maintained between at or about 0.7. Acceptable drinking water levels are described as a function of ambient outside air temperature. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) identifies a value of 0.7 mg/l and the World Health Organization recommends a range of 0.5-1.0 mg/l. The rationale behind the temperature range is that in warmer climates people tend to drink more. Fluoride addition to the water supplies aids in reducing dental decay.

Q. Do you add any other chemicals to the water? What are they and why do you add them?

A. Yes. We add several other chemicals to the water. **Sodium Hypochlorite** is added for disinfection to prevent disease. **Aluminum sulfate** (alum) and **Calcium hydroxide** (lime) are added in the treatment process to enhance coagulation and sedimentation.

Q. Will the City test my water for bacteria, chemicals, or other materials?

A. Yes. The City will perform testing of customers' water for identified problems or concerns. We have a routine testing program in the distribution system to test for bacteria and chlorine residuals. Daily testing is performed for a variety of other parameters. Other chemical testing is performed quarterly and annually. (See the annual "Water Quality Report" on the web site)

Q. My water pressure has dropped off and seems to fluctuate. What could this be?

A. The water distribution system has various pressure zones. Your water pressure will normally vary only slightly within each zone. If you are seeing a drop or increase in your water pressure, there could be a problem in your building. Most buildings are required to have a pressure-reducing valve installed. These valves maintain a set pressure and when they fail can cause either an increase or a decrease in pressure. Call us to assist in determining your problem.