

# Town of Taos

## The Water We Drink



## Consumer Confidence Report for 2008



- One of the most important natural resources we have is our water. We at the Town of Taos Public Utilities Department take this responsibility seriously and continually check and verify that you are receiving quality water.

- **Is my water safe?**

Last year, as in years past, your tap water met all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state drinking water health standards. The Town of Taos safeguards its water supplies and once again we are proud to report that our system has never violated a maximum contaminant level or any other water quality standard. This report is a snapshot of last year's water quality. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. We are committed to providing you this information because informed customers are our best allies.

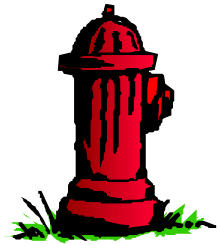


Booster Station, Taos, NM

- **Do I need to take special precautions?**  
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/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guide-lines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from SDWH.

**(SDWH) Safe Drinking  
Water**

**Hotline (800-426-4791)**



**Where does my water come from?**

The Town of Taos, Public Utilities Department pumps water from the Olloval Aquifer or Lana Formation and is not exposed to precipitation and runoff. Ground water can normally be expected to be less susceptible to many types of contaminants that are common in surface water. The Town of Taos has seven well sites providing water to its citizens. Due to the drought conditions we ask that people please water conservatively. The Town of Taos has some water conservation brochures available to the public at the Utility Billing Office located at Town Hall, 400 Camino de la Placita.

**Source water assessment and its availability**

The New Mexico Environment Department conducted a source susceptibility ranking between low to high. A copy of this report is available upon request or contact the NMED Drinking Water Bureau at 1-877-654-8720 for a copy.

## **Why are there contaminants in my drinking water?**

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of 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 calling the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

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 materials, and can pick up substances resulting from presence of animals or from human activity. Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, that 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 storm water 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 storm water runoff, and residential uses. Organic Chemical Contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water 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, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

### **Information on lead in drinking 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 material and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Taos Municipal Water System 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 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 at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

### **Additional Information for Arsenic**

While your drinking water meets EPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. EPA's standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. EPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.



## **WATER CONSERVATION PUBLIC NOTICE**

As you all know, New Mexico is in a significant drought. Unless we receive adequate precipitation this summer, we may find it hard to maintain water supplies to meet residential and other water needs. Drought is a serious issue and we strongly urge everyone to make a community effort to stop unnecessary water use. The State Engineers Office has graciously sent the Town of Taos Water Division some water conservation pamphlets which have some very good landscaping ideas and water conservation measures we can all use as guidelines and are available for pick-up at the Town of Taos, Utility Billing Office located at 400 Camino de la Placita or at the Public Utilities Department at 1030 Dea Lane. For more information call Amos Torres, Public Utilities Director at (575)751-2047.