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City of Canton Public Water Supply Exceeds Federal and State Standards

On Wednesday, October 23, the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit environmental activist organization, released a report indicating that water provided by the City of Canton to customers contains contaminants exceeding healthy limits ***recommended by EWG***. The guidelines published in the EWG report are not legal limits and have not undergone the scrutiny of the federal and state regulatory processes.

The City of Canton is committed to providing safe drinking water to all our customers. Our drinking water meets or exceeds all state and federal water quality regulations set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Under EPA and EPD, water produced by the City of Canton and other public water systems is more highly regulated and receives much more oversight than that sold in bottles.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires EPA to review each national primary drinking water regulation (including Maximum Contaminant Levels, or MCLs) at least once every six years and revise them, if appropriate. The EPA is required to consider three criteria when deciding whether to regulate a contaminant:

- The contaminant may have an adverse effect on the health of persons
- The contaminant is known to occur or there is a high chance that the contaminant will occur in public water systems often enough and at levels of public health concern
- Regulation of the contaminant presents a meaningful opportunity for health risk reductions for persons served by public water systems

Additional information is available through the attached FAQ.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the City of Canton at 770-704-1500 or email info@cantonga.gov.

City of Canton

Drinking Water FAQs

Is my water safe?

Yes; Water provided by the City of Canton meets or exceeds all EPA and EPD regulations. In addition to quarterly and annual sampling, the City tests approximately 100 water samples a month from original water sources, Canton Water Treatment Plant, and Canton water distribution system.

Who regulates drinking water?

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply. The law was amended in 1986 and 1996 and requires many actions to protect drinking water and its sources. SDWA authorizes the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has granted primacy to Georgia to administer the provisions of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The Georgia EPD is a state agency charged with protecting Georgia's air, land, and water resources through the authority of state and federal environmental statutes.

The Georgia EPD water regulations generally follow the complete or revised national primary drinking water regulations under the SDWA (CGA 12-5-177), but they also have some additional requirements. For example, Georgia also requires that water wells and springs to be used as drinking water sources be approved and comply with state regulations. Operators of public water supply systems must be certified by the state.

What is a Maximum Contaminant Level (mcl)?

Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) are standards that are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for drinking water quality. An MCL is the legal threshold limit on the amount of a containment that is allowed in public water systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

How is a Maximum Containment Level determined?

EPA has drinking water regulations for more than 90 contaminants. The Safe Drinking Water Act includes a process that EPA must follow to identify and list unregulated contaminants.

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires EPA to consider three criteria when deciding to regulate:

- The contaminant may have an adverse effect on the health of persons
- The contaminant is known to occur or there is a high chance that the contaminant will occur in public water systems often enough and at levels of public health concern
- Regulation of the contaminant presents a meaningful opportunity for health risk reductions for persons served by public water systems

If EPA decides to regulate a particular contaminant, the Agency starts the rulemaking process to establish the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations

If EPA decides not to regulate a contaminant, then the Agency may decide to develop a health advisory. A health advisory is a non-enforceable federal limit. It serves as technical guidance for federal, state, and local officials.

How often are these levels revised?

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires EPA to review each national primary drinking water regulation (including maximum contaminant levels) at least once every six years and revise them, if appropriate. As part of the "Six-Year Review," EPA evaluates any newly available data, information and technologies to determine if any regulatory revisions are needed. Revisions must maintain or strengthen public health protection.

Where can I find the federal drinking water regulations?

Federal drinking water regulations are codified in Title 40 of the Code Federal Regulations (CFR).

- CFR Part 141: National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. These set maximum levels for contaminants allowed in drinking water or treatment technique rules.
- CFR Part 142: National Primary Drinking Water Regulations Implementation. These cover how the states, tribes and EPA carry out the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) program.

- CFR Part 143: National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations. These set recommended standards that relate to the acceptability of drinking water to consumers. These are not enforceable (except for the public notice required for exceedance of the fluoride secondary standard).

Where can I find information about what's in my drinking water?

Both the EPA and EPD require community water systems to deliver a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), also known as an annual drinking water quality report, to their customers. These reports provide Americans information about their local drinking water quality. Reports are typically sent out to customers during the summer of each year. Reports are also available on the City's website https://www.cantonga.gov/gov/departments/water_quality_reports.htm. If you would like an additional copy or did not received your report, please call the City of Canton.

How often is my water tested?

In addition to quarterly and annual sampling, Canton tests approximately 100 water samples a month from original water sources, Canton water distribution system, and the Canton Water Treatment Plant.

Will I know if my water hasn't met an EPA requirement?

Yes, Water systems are required to include information regarding any contaminant detected in violation of an EPA health standard and potential health effects of the contaminant in the Consumer Confidence Report. There are there three levels for contaminant violation. Level I violations require public communication within 24 hours. Level II violations require public communication within 30 days. Level III violations require public communication within a year.

Why are these contaminants found in my water, what are they and what are their maximum contaminant levels?

Chromium (hexavalent):

- Total Chromium is found in discharge from steel and pulp mills; erosion of natural deposits
- Testing required by EPA annually

- Maximum contaminant level: 0.1 mg/L
- 2019 level: 0.025 mg/L

Haloacetic Acid (HAA5) (includes Dicholoracetic acid and Trichloroacetic acid):

- Haloacetic acids are a disinfection byproduct from the chlorination of drinking water
- Quarterly testing required by EPA
- Maximum Contaminant Level: 0.06 mg/L
- 2018 Level: 0.033 mg/L

Nitrate and Nitrite:

- Nitrates/Nitrites are found in runoff from fertilizer use; leaking from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits.
- Testing required by EPA annually
- Maximum Contaminant Level: 10 mg/L
- 2018 Level: 0.33 mg/L

Radium, combined (-226 and -228):

- Radium is a radioactive compound naturally found in the erosion of rock and sediment
- Testing required by EPA every nine years
- Maximum Contaminant Level: 5 pCi/L
- 2019 Radium -226 & -228 Level: 1.0 pCi/L (Canton Water Treatment Plant)

Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (including Bromodichloromethane, Chloroform, Dibomochloromethane):

- Total trihalomethanes are a disinfection byproduct from the chlorination of drinking water
- Quarterly testing required by EPA
- Maximum Contaminant Level: 0.08 mg/L

- 2018 Level: 0.034mg/L

Lead:

- Lead is introduced to drinking water by corrosion of household plumbing systems and water lines. Lead does not naturally occur water
- Testing required by EPA every three years
- Maximum Contaminant level: 0.015 mg/L
- 2018 Level: 0.001 mg/L

PFAs (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl acids)

PFAs are a group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including in the United States since the 1940s. PFAs are very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects.

EPA has released a health advisory for PFOS and PFOA (the two most produced chemicals of this group) and has outlined drinking water treatment processes for PFOA/PFOS in drinking water. For more information on PFAs, click here.