

# City of Sandusky 2020 Water Quality Report



Sandusky Big Island Water Works (BIWW) takes great pride in providing quality water service and is pleased to present you with the annual drinking water consumer confidence report. This report is the best way to assure you that your drinking water is safe and reliable.

**We are proud to report that the water provided by Big Island Water Works meets or exceeds all established water quality standards.**

License to Operate (LTO) Status: In 2020 we had an unconditional license to operate our water system. The City of Sandusky water system meets all of the current federal and state standards for public water systems.

Sandusky Big Island Water Works has prepared the following report to provide information to you, the consumer, on the quality of your drinking water. Included in this report is general health information, water quality test results, instructions on how to participate in decisions concerning your drinking water, and water system contacts.

During 2020, BIWW replaced our constant speed 3 MGD High Service Pump Motor as it was nearing the end of its service life. Maintaining and replacing various components of our High Service Pumps is critical to our overall goal of providing a reliable source of safe drinking water.

## **CONCERNING ALGAL TOXINS IN DRINKING WATER**

The Sandusky water treatment process has been effective in removing algal toxins from Lake Erie water since testing began in 2011. In 2020 all tap samples tested at BIWW were non-detect for microcystins.

## **CONCERNING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

The water pumped from the plant does not contain lead, as it tests below the lead detection level. Big Island Water Works adjusts the tap water pH to prevent acidic water and to maintain stability in order to reduce the chances of absorbing metals from household plumbing. The pH is tested every four hours continuously. In addition, stability tests are run weekly to ensure the pH parameters continue to provide stable water to our customers. BIWW's 90th percentile lead results have been below the action level since testing began. In 2020 our 90th percentile was 6 ug/L, well below the federal action level of 15 ug/L (parts per Billion).

It is possible that lead levels at a residence may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in a home's private plumbing.

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 materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Sandusky Big Island Water Works is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in residential 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 from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

## **WATER SOURCE**

Our system draws surface water from Lake Erie. The intake is located three-quarters of a mile out in the lake off Cedar Point Chaussee. Lake water is gravity-fed into the Big Island Water Works by a 42" steel intake pipe. We did not experience any issues with frazil ice requiring a switch to the emergency Sandusky Bay Intake in the winter of 2020.

## **SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT**

The City of Sandusky Public Water System uses surface water drawn from two intakes: a main intake located in Lake Erie and an emergency back-up intake located in Sandusky Bay. For the purpose of source water assessments, all surface waters in Ohio are considered to be susceptible to contamination. By their nature, surface waters are accessible and can be readily contaminated by chemicals and pathogens, with relatively short travel times from source to intake.

Although the water system's main intake is located offshore in

Lake Erie, the proximity of several onshore sources increases the susceptibility of the source water to contamination. The City of Sandusky Public Water System's drinking water source protection area is susceptible to contamination from municipal sewage treatment plants, industrial wastewater, combined sewer overflows, home sewage disposal system discharges, open water dredge disposal operations, and accidental releases and spills, especially from commercial shipping operations and recreational boating.

The City of Sandusky Public Water System treats the water to meet drinking water quality standards, but no single treatment technique can address all potential contaminants. The potential for water quality impacts can be further decreased by implementing measures to protect Lake Erie. More detailed information is provided in the City of Sandusky Public Water System's Drinking Water Source Assessment report, which can be obtained by calling 419.627.5815.

## **SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION IN DRINKING WATER**

The sources of drinking water, both tap 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 material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include: (A) Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife; (B) 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; (C) Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses; (D) 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; (E) 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, USEPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health. 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 calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

## EXPLANATION OF VIOLATIONS

There were **NO** violations in 2020.

## WHO NEEDS 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 infection. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

## VARIANCES AND EXEMPTIONS

None

### UNREGULATED CONTAMINANT MONITORING RULE (UCMR)

BIWW was required to collect samples for testing in 2020. Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated

contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

Under the public notice rule, public water systems participating in UCMR sampling must provide a special notice of the availability of unregulated contaminant monitoring results whether or not contaminants are detected. Results are available from the Water Services Superintendent at 419-627-5815.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

William R. Burch, Assistant Water Services Superintendent, prepared this report. He is in his 19<sup>th</sup> year of commercial water purification and holds a Class III Water Treatment license from the State of Ohio. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact him at 419.627.5815.

## HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS REGARDING MY DRINKING WATER?

Public participation and comments are encouraged at regular meetings of the City Commission which meets twice a month as announced on [www.ci.sandusky.oh.us](http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us)

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## The City of Sandusky Water-Quality Data Table Glossary

The table shows the results of our water-quality analyses. The data presented in the table are from the most recent testing done in accordance with the regulations. Every regulated contaminant we detected in the water, even in the minutest traces, is listed here. The table contains the name of each substance, the highest level allowed by regulation (MCL), the ideal goals for public health, the amount detected, the usual source of such contaminant, footnotes explaining our findings, and a key to units of measurements.

### Terminology definitions:

**Action level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system shall follow.

**Cyanobacteria:** Photosynthesizing bacteria, also called blue-green algae, which occur naturally in marine and freshwater ecosystems, and may produce cyanotoxins, which at sufficiently high concentrations can pose a risk to public health.

**Cyanotoxin:** Toxin produced by cyanobacteria. These toxins include liver toxins, nerve toxins, and skin toxins, (sometimes referred to as "algal toxin").

**Maximum contaminant level (MCL):** The highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG):** 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.

**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 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 contaminants.

**Microcystins:** Liver toxins produced by a number of cyanobacteria. Total microcystins are the sum of all the variants/congeners (forms) of the cyanotoxin microcystin.

**N/A:** Not applicable.

**NTU:** Nephelometric Turbidity Units.

**ND:** Non-detect.

**ppm:** parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L).

**ppb:** part per billion, or micrograms per Liter (ug/L).

**pCi/L:** picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity).

**Secondary maximum contaminant level (SMCL):** These are guidelines, not enforceable limits. They identify acceptable concentrations of contaminants which cause unpleasant tastes, odors, or colors in the water. SMCLs are for contaminants that will not cause adverse health effects.

**Threshold level:** The lead threshold level is exceeded at 0.015 milligrams per liter concentration of lead in an individual tap water sample. (15ppb)

**Treatment technique (TT):** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**Turbidity:** Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of water and is an indication of the effectiveness of our filtration system. The turbidity limit set by the EPA is 0.3 NTU in 95% of the samples analyzed each month and shall not exceed 1 NTU at any time. As reported in the table, the Big Island Water Work's highest recorded turbidity result for 2020 was 0.12 NTU and lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the turbidity limits was 100%.

PARAMETER	Date of Test	MCL	MCLG	Level Detected	Unit	Range	Typical Source of Contaminants	Violation
<b>INORGANIC CONTAMINANT</b>								
Barium	2020	2	2	0.017	ppm	0.017-0.017	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits.	NO
Nitrate	Monthly	10	10	1.0	ppm	0.0 – 1.4	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.	NO
Fluoride	Daily	4	4	0.9	ppm	0.8-1.1	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth. Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.	NO
Lead *	7/9/20-7/18/20	AL=15	0	6	ppb	N/A	Corrosion of household plumbing.	NO
Copper *	7/9/20-7/18/20	AL=1.3	1.3	0.041	ppm	N/A	Corrosion of household plumbing,	NO
* 90th %: Results from 30 samples collected for lead and copper in 2020 were used to calculate the 90th %. The lowest concentration for lead was <4 ppb (not detected) and the highest concentration was 14 ppb. 0 of 30 homes exceeded the copper MCLG.								
<b>DISINFECTANT RESIDUAL</b>								
Chlorine	Continuous	MRDL=4	MRDLG=4	1.3	ppm	1.1-1.4	Water additive used to control microbes.	NO
<b>MICROBIOLOGICAL CONTAMINANT</b>								
Turbidity	Continuous	0.30	<0.10	0.12	NTU	0.02-0.12	Soil runoff; sediment from lake bottom.	NO
Turbidity (% meeting standard)	2020	N/A	TT	100%	%	100%		NO
Total Organic Carbon	Monthly	N/A	TT removal > 1	1.4	ratio	1.0-1.9	Naturally present in the environment.	NO
<b>VOLATILE ORGANIC CONTAMINANTS</b>								
TTHMs (Total Trihalomethanes)	Quarterly	80	N/A	64.0	ppb	18.6-64.4	By-product of drinking water chlorination.	NO
HAA5 (Haloacetic Acids)	Quarterly	60	N/A	14.6	ppb	3.7-18.1	By-product of drinking water chlorination.	NO
<b>UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS</b>								
Manganese	Weekly	SMCL=50	N/A	0.05	ppb	0-4.2	Erosion of natural deposits.	NO
<b>UCMR4 UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS</b>								
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5)	Quarterly	N/A	N/A	7.9	ppb	17.9-37.8	By-product of drinking water chlorination.	NO
Haloacetic Acids HAA6Br	Quarterly	N/A	N/A	3.8	ppb	9.0-14.4	By-product of drinking water chlorination.	NO
Haloacetic Acids HAA9	Quarterly	N/A	N/A	11.2	ppb	24.5-49.8	By-product of drinking water chlorination.	NO

## **BACKFLOW**

Backflow can affect our most valuable resource—our drinking water! Backflow is the abnormal backward flow of water from your water line back into other fixtures in your building and quite possibly back into the city water main. Under normal conditions the city water mains are pressurized and backflow will not occur. However, during a period of high demand, such as a main break or fire, it is possible for backflow to occur, because the city pressure at that time is greatly reduced. The reason this is a matter of concern is that in many businesses and industries, and even in people's own homes, there are connections made to the city water lines that feed service sinks, irrigation systems, ponds and pools, systems filled with chemicals, and many others. If the chemicals/contaminants from these systems do backflow, it is possible for this water that may now contain bacteria, chemicals, or even sewage, to reach another fixture in your home or even possibly affect your neighbors' water supply. Drinking, cooking, washing, and bathing, using the contaminated water has caused chemical burns, corrosion of pipes, illness, and even, in the worst cases, death, depending on the substance that has been pulled back into the city main. It is the property owner's responsibility to make sure that these potentially harmful connections to city water are either removed or that the proper backflow device is installed. Once installed, it must be tested every 12 months by a plumber who is certified to test backflow devices. The results of the annual test must be sent to the Water Department.

### **Here are some simple things you can do to help us protect your water:**

- Never leave a hose end in a swimming pool, sink, bucket, or sump crock, or any area of standing water where soapy or chemically-contaminated water could be siphoned back through the hose into the water supply.
- Never use spray attachments for fertilizer or pesticides that directly connect to a hose unless protected by a backflow device.
- Make sure to install hose bib vacuum breakers on outdoor spigots (available at your local hardware store!)
- Install an approved backflow device on all irrigation systems to prevent the entrance of lawn chemicals and other undesirable substances through the submerged irrigation heads.

### **Homeowners:**

Please call the water department if any of the following hazards are present on your property:

- A swimming pool/hot tub with automatic fill from city pressure
- An underground irrigation system that is connected to your city water service
- An additional source of water, such as a private well for drinking, irrigation or other purposes, a pond, or bay water for irrigation or watering

### **Business & Industry:**

- Are there any connections of city water to equipment or piping which could contain non-potable water? They should either be removed or properly protected with a backflow device approved by the Water Department.
- Is the city water connected to a system containing pumps that could possibly overcome city pressure and cause backflow?

If you feel you may have a hazard present on your property or would like more information on backflow, please call the Water Department Backflow Integrity Specialist at 419.627.5818 or 419.357.7856. We can schedule an appointment with you for a field survey on your property. During the survey, we can determine what measures need to be taken, if any, against the hazards present. Together, we can help ensure that you and your neighbors are properly protected from a backflow incident.

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Big Island Water Works  
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[www.ci.sandusky.oh.us](http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us)

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## POSTAL CUSTOMER

### Sandusky, Ohio 44870



We encourage public interest and participation in our community's decisions affecting drinking water. Regular City Commission meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. Please call 419.627.5850 for information on attending the next meeting. The public is always welcome. Find out more about Big Island Water Works at [www.ci.sandusky.oh.us](http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us).

City Office Directory

City Commission  
419.627.5850

Manager's Office  
419.627.5844

Public Works &  
Engineering  
419.627.5829

Big Island Water Works  
419.627.5805

Water Pollution Control  
419.627.5907