

# DBPs (Disinfection by Products) FAQs



## **Q: *What are Disinfection By-products (DBPs)?***

A: Disinfection by-products (DBPs) are formed when a water treatment disinfectant, such as chlorine, interacts with natural organic materials in water. Exposure to DBPs occurs by drinking chlorinated water and by breathing in air containing DBPs during activities such as showering, bathing, dishwashing, and swimming.

## **Q: *Does Medford Water monitor for DBPs?***

A: We monitor for DBPs four times a year, and publish the results in our [Consumer Confidence Report](#), which focuses on providing details about compliance with regulations; data for 2021 is currently available, and data for 2022 will be available no later than July 1. It is also published in our [Annual Water Quality Analyses](#), which is a comprehensive listing of all of our annual testing results; data for 2021 is currently available, and data for 2022 will be available in March.

Our DBP levels are below—and in compliance with—the regulations of maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) have established to protect human health. However, if a violation occurs, we are required to inform our customers. If consumed in excess of the EPA's MCLs over many years, DBPs may increase health risks.

## **Q: *Why is our water treated with chlorine?***

A: Drinking water must be disinfected to treat disease-causing microbial pathogens (e.g., bacteria, viruses, protozoa, parasites). Chlorine, in the form of sodium hypochlorite, is used as a disinfectant in our treatment process; we are required to maintain a residual amount in the water to provide continuous protection from microbial contamination as it travels through our distribution system and to your tap. Sampling throughout the system confirms that the amount of chlorine present is neither too low nor too high per the limits set by the EPA. Our water is effectively disinfected with much less chlorine than the allowable limit.

## **Q: *What is Medford Water doing to reduce DBPs and improve water quality?***

A: In addition to using less chlorine than the allowable limit to effectively disinfect our drinking water, our Source Water Protection Program works with land use managers and partners throughout the region and state, advocating the use of best management practices to reduce organic matter in our source water.

## **Q: *Where does our water come from?***

A: During the winter months, our drinking water comes from Big Butte Springs, a ground water source that provides water of exceptional quality. During the peak-use summer months, water from the Rogue River is used to supplement the springs supply. The river water is also of high quality, but additional treatment—performed at the Robert A. Duff Water Treatment Plant—is required.

Treatment of this surface water source consists of coagulation, settling, and filtration, followed by disinfection. The addition of ozone in 2002 provided a dramatic reduction in musty taste and odors occasionally found in the river water.

**Q: *Where can I find out more about what is in my drinking water?***

A: Medford Water's top priority is providing drinking water of the highest quality to our customers. Our [Consumer Confidence Report](#) provides details about compliance with regulations, while our [Annual Water Quality Analyses](#) is a comprehensive listing of all testing results.

**Q: *How does Medford Water make sure our water meets Safe Drinking Water standards?***

A: Every month, Medford Water staff members collect and analyze hundreds of water samples from throughout the system. In fact, we test even more frequently and extensively than the Environmental Protection Agency mandates. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires water purveyors to test for nearly 100 chemicals, radiological and bacteriological contaminants—but we even look for things that are not regulated. Water quality is also monitored 24 hours a day using real-time monitoring technology throughout the system.

**Q: *Who can I call if I have any questions about water quality?***

A: For information about water quality, call us at 541-774-2430. Questions also can be emailed to [customerservice@medfordwater.org](mailto:customerservice@medfordwater.org). The EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline is 1-800-426-4791.

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*More questions? Contact our Customer Service Team at (541) 774-2430.*