



CITY OF
Lethbridge

Water Consumer Confidence Report 2019

Where does our water come from?

The City of Lethbridge gets all of its water from the Oldman River. A river is considered a surface water supply. Lethbridge does not use groundwater from wells. Our Water Treatment Plant processes river water into safe and healthy drinking water. The plant site is on the east bank of the river, south of Whoop-Up Drive, and across the river from the University of Lethbridge. We process an average of about 61 million liters of high-quality drinking water on a daily basis. The maximum daily production, in 2019, was 114 million liters on August 1st.

How is the water treated so you can drink it?

Like many water utilities with a surface water supply, we use a multi-step treatment process consisting of the following:

1. **Coagulation** is the addition of approved treatment water treatment chemicals to convert microscopic particles and other contaminants into larger and heavier particles.
2. **Sedimentation** is a process that removes the majority of these larger particles by settling them in tanks called clarifiers.
3. **Filtration** of the “settled” water removes most of the remaining particles to thousandths of a millimeter (too small to see).
4. **Fluoridation** is the addition of fluoride ion to the water to benefit the community’s dental health. Lethbridge has added fluoride to the drinking water since 1974.
5. **Disinfection** of the water with chlorine is a way to protect public health from disease causing organisms that can be found in the river. The risk to public health is reduced further by treatment with ultraviolet light (UV). Before the water leaves the treatment plant, we combine the chlorine with ammonia to form chloramine. This reduces the formation of disinfection by-products, and ensures a long-lasting “residual” to protect your water against bacteria or other organisms on its journey to your home tap.

How is the water tested to assure its quality?

The certified operators at the treatment plant performed about 29,000 water tests as part of their daily routines in 2019. Over 1302 bacteriological tests were performed by the Provincial Public Health Laboratory on samples collected each week from throughout the water distribution system. Each month, a treated water sample is sent to a commercial laboratory for some 50 different analyses, like metals and disinfection by-products. And finally, at least twice each year treated water samples are subjected to a scan of 40 organic compounds including pesticide chemicals, over 40 tests for metals, and other routine analysis. In total, over 32,000 tests were conducted on our treated drinking water in the year 2019.

How does our water measure up?

Lethbridge drinking water consistently exceeds the regulated requirements established by Health Canada in the “Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality”, and the specific requirements within our Waterworks Approval from the Province of Alberta issued under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.

Water Quality Summary 2019

Health Related

Parameter	Units	MAC	Range	Average
Turbidity	NTU	0.3	0.017 - 0.076	0.039
Chloramines	mg/L	3.0	1.90 – 1.98	1.93
Nitrate - N	mg/L	10	0.02 – 0.62	0.2
Fluoride	mg/L	1.5	0.70 – 0.83	0.79
Trihalomethanes	mg/L	0.1	8 – 30	16
Chromium	mg/L	0.05	<0.0005	<0.0005
Lead	mg/L	0.005	<0.0001	<0.0001
Manganese	mg/L	0.12	<0.005	<0.005

Bacterial Testing

	Total Samples	Total Negative Results	Total Positive Results	Total Resamples
Water Treatment Plant and Storage Reservoir Samples	300	300	0	0
Distribution Samples	1002	1002	0	0

Non Health Related

Parameter	Units	AO	Range	Average
pH	n/a	7.0 – 10.5	7.13 – 7.56	7.39
Hardness	mg/L	n/a ¹	145 - 210	175
TDS - total dissolved solids	mg/L	≤500	177 - 261	224
Sulfate	mg/L	≤500	32 – 57.8	47.7
Sodium	mg/L	≤200	9.6 – 18.1	14.3
Iron	mg/L	0.05	<0.01 – 0.02	<0.01
Manganese	mg/L	≤0.02	<0.005	<0.005
Aluminum	mg/L	n/a ²	0.027 – 0.102	0.053

Definitions:

MAC = Maximum acceptable concentration established by Health Canada

AO = Aesthetic objective (no health based limit) suggested by Health Canada

NTU = Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

mg/L = milligrams per litre or one part per million

¹ Although hardness may have significant aesthetic effects, a guideline has not been established because public acceptance of hardness may vary considerably according to the local conditions; major contributor to hardness (calcium & magnesium) are not of direct public health concern.

² *Operational guidance value* of less than 0.1 mg/L total aluminum. There is no consistent, convincing evidence that aluminum in drinking water causes adverse health effects in humans.