



# 2024 Consumer Confidence Report on Inver Grove Heights Drinking Water Quality



[ighmn.gov/WaterReport](http://ighmn.gov/WaterReport)

# City of Inver Grove Heights WATER NOTICE

The City of Inver Grove Heights has received two drinking water violation notices from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) related to drinking water contaminants that were tested above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) set forth by the MDH.

The first notice, received in January 2023 and tied to a water sample taken in October, 2022, indicated that the average level of combined radium in the City's drinking water was at 6.0 pCi/L, above the MCL of 5.4 pCi/L. A second notification, received in March, 2025 and tied to a water sample taken in December, 2024, indicated that the average level of gross alpha radiation (a byproduct of radium decomposition) in the City's drinking water was at 16.6 pCi/L, above the MCL of 15.4 pCi/L. The City entered into a compliance agreement with the MDH in July 2023, indicating steps the City will take to make long-term improvements to the Water Treatment Plant, and bring the overall system into compliance for both radium and gross alpha radiation levels below the MCL.

Some people who exclusively drink water containing radium-226 or -228 or gross alpha radiation in excess of the MCL over many years may have increased health risks. You will be informed when the City's public water system has reduced the level of radium and gross alpha radiation to levels that meet the compliance agreement requirements for drinking water standards.

Please share this information with all other people who drink City of Inver Grove Heights water, especially those who may not have received this Water Report directly, e.g., people in apartments, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, and businesses. You can do this by making this report available in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. If you need a printed copy of the report, visit [ighmn.gov/WaterReport](https://ighmn.gov/WaterReport) to download it, or call 651-450-4309.



## Steps the City Has Taken

The City started a water treatment facility rehabilitation project in 2024, to replace all filtration materials and improve several chemical treatment processes within the water treatment facility. The first half of the filtration material replacement effort will be completed by the end of May 2025, and the second half completed in the Fall of 2025. Past modifications to pumping and chemical treatment techniques at the water treatment plant since 2023 have been effective at lowering the radium concentration, and the current filter improvements will further reduce radium and gross alpha radiation levels through improved filtration methods. Although the City had a recent exceedance for gross alpha radiation, all tests taken in 2023 and 2024 have indicated an average radium concentration at or below the MCL of 5.4 pCi/L, indicating the interim measures have been effective at reducing radium levels until the water treatment plant filter replacement improvements can be completed.

## Impacts

The City takes this matter seriously and is acting urgently to mitigate this issue. However, this is not an emergency. You do not need an alternative source of water (such as bottled water), nor do you need to boil water before use. People with specific health concerns are encouraged to consult their doctor or health care provider.

## More Information is Available

A City webpage devoted to this topic will be updated when new information is available: [ighmn.gov/WaterNotice](https://ighmn.gov/WaterNotice). **Questions?** Email [water@ighmn.gov](mailto:water@ighmn.gov) or call 651-450-4309.



# Our Team is Dedicated to Safe Drinking Water

Your drinking water comes from a groundwater source: six wells ranging from 360 to 542 feet deep, that draw water from the Jordan aquifer.

Inver Grove Heights works hard to provide you with safe and reliable drinking water that meets federal and state water quality requirements. The purpose of this report is to provide you with information on your drinking water and how to protect our precious water resources.

Contact IGH Utilities Division at **651-450-4309**, or send an email to **water@ighmn.gov** if you have questions about Inver Grove Heights's drinking water. You can also ask for information about how you can take part in decisions that may affect water quality.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets safe drinking water standards. These standards limit the amounts of specific contaminants allowed in drinking water. This ensures that tap water is safe to drink for most people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates the amount of certain contaminants in bottled water. Bottled water must provide the same public health protection as public tap water.

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 at **1-800-426-4791**.



Water Treatment Facility, IGH

## Where Does Our Drinking Water Come From?

Ground water supplies 99 percent of total domestic, municipal, and industrial water used in Dakota County.

GEOLOGIC FORMATION	GENERAL LITHOLOGY	PRESENCE & USE OF WATER
<b>Quaternary Deposits</b> Surface deposits of sand and gravel; erodes easily.		May contain water used for domestic, commercial, and irrigation purposes. Easily contaminated.
<b>Decorah Shale</b> Clay-like shale with thin fossil-bearing limestone.		Helps to protect underlying aquifers from contamination.
<b>Plateville and Glenwood Formations</b> Fossil-bearing limestone and sandy shale.		Supplies very limited amounts of water to northern Dakota County.
<b>St. Peter Sandstone</b> Poorly cemented, granular sandstone.		Supplies limited amounts of water to Dakota County. Easily contaminated in central and southern portions of the County.
<b>Prairie du Chien Formation</b> Limestone		Supplies water for domestic use.
<b>Jordan Sandstone</b> Poorly cemented, granular sandstone.		Primary source for municipal, industrial and high capacity irrigation wells.
Shaley sandstone or siltstone.		Produces small amounts of water in eastern Dakota County.
Silty to coarse-grained sandstone.		Produces water to supplement flow in some high capacity industrial wells.
<b>Eau Claire Formation</b> Siltstone, fine sandstone, and shale.		Does not contain water.
<b>Mt. Simon-Hinkley Formation</b> Fine to coarse-grained sandstone.		The deepest high-yielding aquifer in Dakota County. Protected for future use with a restriction on new well drilling.

Source: Dakota County Ground Water and Geology.

# Inver Grove Heights Water Monitoring Results

## REGULATED SUBSTANCES

This report contains our monitoring results from **January 1 to December 31, 2024.**

We work with the Minnesota Department of Health to test drinking water for more than 100 contaminants. It is not unusual to detect contaminants in small amounts. No water supply is ever completely free of contaminants. Drinking water standards protect Minnesotans from substances that may be harmful to their health.

Learn more by visiting the Minnesota Department of Health's webpage **Basics of Monitoring and Testing of Drinking Water in Minnesota** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/sampling.html>).

### How to Read the Water Quality Data Tables

The tables on the next three pages show the contaminants we found last year or the most recent time we sampled for that contaminant. They also show the levels of those contaminants and the Environmental Protection Agency's limits. Substances that we tested

for but were not present in the water samples are not included in the tables.

We sample for some contaminants less than once a year because their levels in water are not expected to change from year to year. If we found any of these contaminants the last time we sampled for them, we included them in the tables below with the detection date.

We may have done additional monitoring for contaminants that are not included in the Safe Drinking Water Act. To request a copy of these results, call the Minnesota Department of Health at **651-201-4700** between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Some contaminants are monitored regularly throughout the year, and rolling (or moving) annual averages are used to manage compliance. Because of this averaging, there are times where the Range of Detected Test Results for the calendar year is lower than the Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result, because it occurred in the previous calendar year.

## DEFINITIONS

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

**EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency

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

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

**MRDL (Maximum residual disinfectant level):** 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.

**MRDLG (Maximum residual disinfectant level goal):** The level of a 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.

**N/A (Not applicable):** Does not apply.

**pCi/l (picocuries per liter):** A measure of radioactivity.

**ppt (parts per trillion):** One part per trillion is like one drop in one trillion drops of water, or about one drop in an Olympic sized swimming pool. ppt is the same as nanograms per liter (ng/l).

**ppb (parts per billion):** One part per billion in water is like one drop in one billion drops of water, or about one drop in a swimming pool. ppb is the same as micrograms per liter (µg/l).

**ppm (parts per million):** One part per million is like one drop in one million drops of water, or about one cup in a swimming pool. ppm is the same as milligrams per liter (mg/l).

**PWSID:** Public water system identification.

LEAD AND COPPER – Tested at customer taps							
Contaminant (Date, if sampled in previous year)	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG)	EPA's Action Level	90% of Results Were Less Than	Number of Homes with High Levels	Range of Detected Test Results	Violation	Typical Sources
<b>Copper</b> (08/04/22)	0 ppm	90% of homes less than 1.3 ppm	0.15 ppm	0 out of 30	0.04–0.36 ppm	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing.
<b>Lead</b> (08/04/22)	0 ppb	90% of homes less than 15 ppb	4 ppb	2 out of 30	<2.0–1120 ppb	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing.

INORGANIC & ORGANIC CONTAMINANTS – Tested in drinking water						
Contaminant (Date, if sampled in previous year)	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG)	EPA's Limit (MCL)	Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results	Violation	Typical Sources
<b>Combined Radium</b>	0 pCi/l	5 pCi/l	4.3 pCi/l	3.6–4.6 pCi/l	YES	Erosion of natural deposits.
<b>Gross Alpha</b>	0 pCi/l	15 pCi/l	16.6 pCi/l	13.0–21.2 pCi/l	YES	Erosion of natural deposits.
<b>Barium</b> (05/08/23)	2 ppm	2 ppm	0.23 ppm	N/A	NO	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposit.
<b>Uranium</b>	0 ug/L	30 ug/L	0.08 ug/L	0.0–1.3 ug/L	NO	Erosion of natural deposits.

### Potential Health Effects and Corrective Actions (If Applicable)

**Combined Radium:** Previous testing results show that the average level of combined radium was above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 5 pCi/L. An MCL violation was issued for this system on 1/23/2023. Testing will continue until the violation is resolved. This is not an emergency. You do not need an alternative source of water such as bottled water. However, if you have specific health concerns consult your doctor. Home water treatment units are available to reduce radium, which include water softening, reverse osmosis, and distillation. It is recommended that these home water treatment units be certified to ensure radium removal. The use of carbon filters is not recommended for removal of radium, as radium may accumulate in the filter over time. Your public water system is exploring methods to reduce the level of combined radium, which may include an alternative water source or water treatment. You will be informed when the public water system has reduced the level of radium and meets the standard. Please share this information with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, prisons, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

**Combined Radium:** Some people who drink water containing radium-226 or -228 in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

**Gross Alpha:** Recent testing results show that the average level of gross alpha was above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 15 pCi/L. An MCL violation was issued for this system on 3/26/2025. Testing will continue until the violation is resolved. This is not an emergency. You do not need an alternative source of water such as bottled water. However, if you have specific health concerns consult your doctor. Home water treatment units are available to reduce gross alpha, which include water softening, reverse osmosis, and distillation. It is recommended that these home water treatment units be certified to ensure gross alpha removal. The use of carbon filters is not recommended for removal of gross alpha, as it may accumulate in the filter over time. Inver Grove Heights is exploring methods to reduce the level of gross alpha, which may include an alternative water source or water treatment. You will be informed when the public water system has reduced the level of gross alpha and meets the standard. Please share this information with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, prisons, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

**Gross Alpha:** Certain minerals are radioactive and may emit a form of radiation known as alpha radiation. Some people who drink water containing alpha emitters in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

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CONTAMINANTS RELATED TO DISINFECTION – Tested in drinking water						
Substance (Date, if sampled in previous year)	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG or MRDLG)	EPA's Limit (MCL or MRDL)	Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results	Violation	Typical Sources
<b>Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)</b>	N/A	80 ppb	24.1 ppb	14.00-24.10 ppb	NO	By-product of drinking water disinfection.
<b>Total Haloacetic Acids (HAA)</b>	N/A	60 ppb	5.7 ppb	2.40-5.70 ppb	NO	By-product of drinking water disinfection.
<b>Total Chlorine</b>	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0.56 ppm	0.40-0.65 ppm	NO	Water additive used to control microbes.

Total HAA refers to HAA5

OTHER SUBSTANCES – Tested in drinking water						
Substance (Date, if sampled in previous year)	EPA's Ideal Goal (MCLG)	EPA's Limit (MCL)	Highest Average or Highest Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results	Violation	Typical Sources
<b>Fluoride</b>	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0.71 ppm	0.61-0.68 ppm	NO	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive to promote strong teeth.

### Potential Health Effects and Corrective Actions (If Applicable)

**Fluoride:** Fluoride is nature’s cavity fighter, with small amounts present naturally in many drinking water sources. There is an overwhelming weight of credible, peer-reviewed, scientific evidence that fluoridation reduces tooth decay and cavities in children and adults, even when there is availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinses. Since studies show that optimal fluoride levels in drinking

water benefit public health, Minnesota State Statute 144.145 requires that municipal community water systems adjust the level of fluoride in the water to an optimal concentration between 0.5 to 0.9 parts per million (ppm) to protect your teeth. Fluoride levels below 2.0 ppm are not expected to increase the risk of a cosmetic condition known as enamel fluorosis.



River Front Park in IGH

## UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES/EMERGING CONTAMINANTS

In addition to testing drinking water for contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, we sometimes also monitor for contaminants that are not regulated. Unregulated contaminants do not have legal limits for drinking water. MDH, EPA, and other health agencies may have developed comparison values for some of these compounds. Some of these comparison values are based solely on potential health impacts and do not consider our ability to measure contaminants at very low concentrations nor the cost and technology of prevention and/or treatment. These values may be set at levels that are costly, challenging, or impractical for a water system to meet (for example, large-scale treatment technology may not exist for a given contaminant). Sample data are listed along with comparison values in the table below; it is important to note that these comparison values are not enforceable.

Detection alone of a regulated or unregulated contaminant should not cause concern. The significance of a detection should be determined considering current health effects information. We are often still learning about the health effects, so this information can change over time.

A person drinking water with a contaminant at or below the comparison value would be at little to no risk for harmful health effects. If the level of a contaminant is above the comparison value, people of a certain age or with special health conditions—like a fetus, infants, children, elderly, and people with impaired immunity—may need to take extra precautions. We are notifying you of the unregulated/emerging contaminants we have detected as a public education opportunity.

Unregulated contaminant monitoring helps EPA to determine where certain contaminants occur and whether the Agency should consider regulating those contaminants in the future.

- More information is available on MDH's [A-Z List of Contaminants in Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/index.html>),
- [Fourth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule \(UCMR 4\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/ucmr4.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/ucmr4.html>),
- [Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule](https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule) (<https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule>),
- EPA has developed a [UCMR5 Program Overview Factsheet](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-02/ucmr5-factsheet.pdf) (<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-02/ucmr5-factsheet.pdf>) describing UCMR 5 contaminants and standards.

In the past year, your drinking water may have tested for additional unregulated contaminants as part of the [Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule](https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule) (<https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule>) and results are still being processed. The Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 5 (UCMR 5) Data finder allows people to easily search for, summarize, and download the available [UCMR 5 analytical results](https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule-data-finder) (<https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/fifth-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule-data-finder>).

### Minnesota Department of Health Water Monitoring Results – Unregulated Substances/Emerging Contaminants

UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS/EMERGING CONTAMINANTS – Tested in drinking water			
Contaminant	Comparison Value	Highest Average Result or Highest Single Test Result	Range of Detected Test Results
Sodium*	20 ppb	7.95 ppb	N/A
Sulfate	500 ppb	22.7 ppb	N/A
Lithium (2023)	10 ppb	4.8 ppb	0.00-9.60 ppb
Perfluorobutanoic acid (PFBA) (2023)	7000 ppt	75.5 ppt	49.00-102.00 ppt
Perfluoropentanoic acid (PFPeA) (2023)	N/A	1.77 ppt	0.00-3.54 ppt

\*Note that home water softening can increase the level of sodium in your water.

## Some People Are More Vulnerable to Contaminants in Drinking Water

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. The developing fetus and therefore pregnant women may also be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water. These people or their caregivers should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control (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 at 1-800-426-4791.

# Learn More about Your Drinking Water

## Drinking Water Sources

Groundwater supplies 75 percent of Minnesota's drinking water, and is found in aquifers beneath the surface of the land. Surface water supplies 25 percent of Minnesota's drinking water, and is the water in lakes, rivers, and streams above the surface of the land.

Contaminants can get in drinking water sources from the natural environment and from people's daily activities. There are five main types of contaminants in drinking water sources.

- **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses, bacteria, and parasites. Sources include sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, pets, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants** include salts and metals from natural sources (e.g. rock and soil), oil and gas production, mining and farming operations, urban stormwater runoff, and wastewater discharges.
- **Pesticides and herbicides** are chemicals used to reduce or kill unwanted plants and pests. Sources include agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and commercial and residential properties.
- **Organic chemical contaminants** include synthetic and volatile organic compounds. Sources include industrial processes and petroleum production, gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive contaminants** such as radium, thorium, and uranium isotopes come from natural sources (e.g. radon gas from soils and rock), mining operations, and oil and gas production.

The Minnesota Department of Health provides information about your drinking water source(s) in a source water assessment, including:

- How Inver Grove Heights is protecting your drinking water source(s);

- Nearby threats to your drinking water sources;
- How easily water and pollution can move from the surface of the land into drinking water sources, based on natural geology and the way wells are constructed.

Find your source water assessment at [Source Water Assessments \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/swa.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/swa.html) or call **651-201-4700** between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## Lead in Drinking Water

Lead can cause serious health problems, babies, children under six years, and pregnant women are at the highest risk. You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies, or your job. There is no safe level of lead.

Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Our water system is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes from service lines but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk.

Read below to learn how you can protect yourself from lead in drinking water.

1. **Let the water run** before drinking tap water flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap. If you have a lead service line, you may need to let the water run longer. A service line is the underground pipe that brings water from the main water pipe under the street to your home.

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- Activities such as taking a shower, doing laundry or dishes help keep water moving in your home system but are not a replacement for running the tap before you drink if it has not been used for a long period of time.
  - The only way to know if lead has been reduced by letting it run is to check with a test. If letting the water run does not reduce lead, consider other options to reduce your exposure.
- 2. Know your service line materials** by contacting your public water system, or you can search for your address online at the Minnesota Lead Inventory Tracking Tool (<https://maps.umn.edu/LSL/>).
- **Protect Your Tap: A quick check for lead** (<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/protect-your-tap-quick-check-lead>) is EPA's step by step guide to learn how to find lead pipes in your home.
- 3. Use cold water** for drinking, making food, and making baby formula. Hot water releases more lead from pipes than cold water.
- 4. Test your water.** In most cases, letting the water run and using cold water for drinking and cooking should keep lead levels low in your drinking water. If you are still concerned about lead, arrange with a laboratory to test your tap water. Testing your water is important if young children or pregnant women drink your tap water.
- Contact a Minnesota Department of Health accredited laboratory to get a sample container and instructions on how to submit a sample:  
**Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program** (<https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam>). The Minnesota Department of Health can help you understand your test results.
- 5. Treat your water** if a test shows your water has high levels of lead after you let the water run. You can use a filter certified with ANSI/NSF standards 53 and 42 for lead reduction.
- Read about water treatment units:  
**Point-of-Use Water Treatment Units for Lead Reduction** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/poulead.html>)
- Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and other steps you can take to minimize exposure are available at:
- Visit **EPA Basic Information About Lead in Drinking Water** (<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>)
  - Visit the **Minnesota Department of Health Lead in Drinking Water** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/contaminants/lead.html>)
  - To learn about how to reduce your contact with lead from sources other than your drinking water, visit **Lead Poisoning Prevention: Common Sources** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/edumat.html>)
- 6. Be Aware:** Head Start Programs, Child Care Centers, Public and Charter Schools all have requirements to test for lead in drinking water. These programs can learn more about requirements and resources for testing and remediation at **MDH Drinking Water in Schools and Child Cares** (<https://www.web.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/schools/index.html>)

## Service Line Material Inventory

Inver Grove Heights has completed and submitted our service line materials inventory to the Minnesota Department of Health. The service line inventory is publicly available, and you can check the materials for your service line by visiting the **Lead Inventory Tracking Tool (LITT)** (<https://maps.umn.edu/LSL/>). You may also contact us at 651-450-4309.



## LEARN MORE

- Call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at **1-800-426-4791**. To learn about how to reduce your contact with lead from sources other than your drinking water, visit Lead Poisoning Prevention: **Common Sources** (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/fs/common.html>).

Seidls Lake in IGH

# Looking to Save Money on Your Water Bill?

## LOOK FOR INVISIBLE LEAKS!

Inver Grove Heights Utilities Division personnel have compiled a handy list of checks that residents can make to determine if they may have a water leak in their home:

### Do I have a water leak?

- **Check your fixtures.** Plumbing fixtures can leak water, amounting to tens of thousands of gallons in a three-month billing period. By following the steps below to detect invisible leaks, you may be able to prevent the unwanted arrival of a large utility bill.
- **Check your meter.** To locate your water meter, look inside your home where your water service enters from outside, usually near the furnace and hot water heater. Here you will also find your main water shut-off valve. Turn off all water sources in your home to perform a meter test. Once you've located your meter and turned off your water, look at the meter face. The meter has a small red diamond or star called the low flow indicator. If all water sources are turned off and the low flow indicator is still moving, you probably have a leak.

### Where is the leak?

- **Running toilets.** A common problem, toilet leaks can often be heard. To check for a toilet leak, remove the tank lid—water should only run for a short time after a flush—and see if the water is running without a flush. If it is, it means you have found a toilet leak.
- **Tank flapper valves.** Another problem associated with toilets can be the loss of a seal on the tank flapper valve. To diagnose this problem, turn off water to the toilet. If in a few minutes the water has drained from the tank, you have a leak. Another way to check for this leak is to put a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If colored

water starts to seep into the bowl without a flush, the flapper valve is not sealing.

- **Water softeners.** Your water softener might be another source of an invisible leak. Since the softener usually discharges directly to a drainpipe, it's difficult to monitor how much water is being used by your softener and some can malfunction during the regeneration cycle, causing water to continuously run to the sewer system. An increase in salt consumption is an indicator that your softener may be malfunctioning in this way. If you suspect this problem, check your softener for a by-pass valve, which can stop the flow of water until repairs can be made.
- **Dripping faucets.** Although it might not seem like much waste, a drip every few seconds can add up to over 350 gallons in a quarterly billing period. A leaky faucet can usually be easily fixed by replacing a seal in the fixture.
- **Other common leak sources.** Lawn sprinklers, pools, hot tubs, washing machines, and dishwashers may also be the source of water leaks. Usually leaks from these sources will be visible and result in pooling water somewhere in your home or yard. The same is true of a leaking pipe. You will see water running or pooling somewhere on your property.

### Where can I get additional assistance?

The IGH Utilities Division can assist with setting up consumption monitoring for any utility customer free of charge by contacting **651-450-4309**. The City does not provide leak detection services for leaks within private buildings. Customers who suspect they may have a leak within their building are encouraged to contact a licensed plumber.

# Conservation is Important, Even in the Land of 10,000 Lakes

Despite an abundance of water in our area, conservation is still essential in Minnesota. For example, it is anticipated that in parts of the metropolitan area, groundwater levels are dropping much faster than this water can be replenished. In addition, some agricultural regions in Minnesota are especially vulnerable to drought, which can affect crop yields and municipal supplies. It's important that we use our water wisely. Below are some tips to help you and conserve.

## Water Conservation Tips:

- Water your lawn early in the morning; between 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. is best. Avoid watering late in the evening to help prevent turf-grass diseases. Please do not water your lawn during periods when water use is restricted.
- When watering the lawn, do it long enough for the moisture to soak down to the roots where it will have the greatest benefit. A light sprinkling can evaporate quickly and tends to encourage shallow root systems. Try this: put an empty tuna can on your lawn. When it's full, you've watered the right amount.
- Position your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden, not on paved areas. Also avoid watering on windy days.
- Leave grass longer during hot weather (two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half inches high). This will promote deep root growth, shade the growth crowns, and help protect them during windy periods.
- Rule of thumb for lawn watering: only one to one-and-a-half inches of water are needed per week, including rainfall. Keep intervals between watering as long as possible to encourage deeper root growth.
- Place rain barrels beneath your downspouts. The rainwater can be used for outdoor plants and trees, or to wash your car.
- Repair dripping faucets and leaky toilets. Dripping faucets can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water each year. Leaking toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons per day.
- Replace an 18-liter-per-flush toilet with an ultra-low volume (ULV) six-liter flush model. This represents a 70% savings in water flushed and will cut indoor water use by about 30%.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website has great tips about how you can conserve water and save money in the process. Visit <http://www.epa.gov> to learn more.

## LAWN WATERING

To encourage water conservation, maintain adequate water pressure, and ensure fire-fighting reserves, the City of Inver Grove Heights asks you to restrict both the day and time that you water your lawn. Well-established lawns only need one inch of rain and irrigation combined per week.

### Support Water Conservation

Implementing the following lawn practices will support water conservation even further.

- Landscape your lawn with a variety of low-maintenance turf species such as a mixture of fine fescues or turf-type tall fescues, or pollinator-friendly ground cover.
- Water before the heat of the day, typically between 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the odd/even schedule.
- Use a smart irrigation system with soil moisture detection.
- Ensure irrigation systems are directed to lawn or garden areas and not to paved surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, or roads.

[Click here to learn more about sustainable lawns.](#)

### Other Water Uses

- Residents may wash vehicles and hand-water shrubs, flowers, and trees with a hose on any day and at any time.
- Recreational uses, such as children running through a sprinkler, are also exempted from the recommendations.



## Frequently Asked Questions About Water at Home

**What is the hardness of Inver Grove Heights water?** The level is 20-22 grains or 370 parts per million hardness.

**Do I need to install a water softener in my home?** The hardness level of 20-22 grains is relatively high. Therefore, most homes and businesses in the community find it desirable to soften water through privately owned softeners or a softening service.

**Why is there sand in my water?** The sudden onset of particles that resemble sand are most often the result of a water softener malfunction. These particles collect in faucet screens, washer intake hose screens, and toilet tanks. Please check your owner's manual or maintenance company for assistance.

**What is causing the low pressure in my home?** Normally, low pressure is caused by a malfunctioning water softener. This can be confirmed by checking the pressure at an unsoftened inside or outside tap, or by putting the water softener on by-pass mode (see your owner's manual). If the pressure returns to normal, your softener may need repair. The average pressure in the city distribution system is approximately 75 pounds per square inch.

**Where should my sump pump drain hose discharge?** Outside. Sump pumps to collect ground water are not allowed to discharge into the sanitary sewer system. Hoses must be routed to drain to the outside of the home and not into a laundry tub or floor drain.



## The Pros and Cons of Home Water Softening

Water softeners are a water treatment device that removes dissolved calcium and magnesium. Water softeners must be installed and maintained properly to be safe and effective. Learn more about home water softening at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/softening.html>.

### The benefits of soft water include:

- Increased efficiency of soaps and detergents.
- Reduction in mineral staining on fixtures and in pipes.
- A potential increase in the lifespan of water heaters.

### The drawbacks of soft water include:

- Operation and maintenance costs.
- More sodium. People on low-sodium diets should consult a doctor if they plan to regularly consume softened water.
- The production of salt brine as a byproduct. This can have negative effects at wastewater treatment plants and on ecosystems. You can reduce the amount of salt brine used by installing a salt-free water softening system.

# Help Protect Our Most Precious Resource—WATER

## The Value of Water

Throughout history, civilizations rose and fell based on access to a plentiful, safe water supply. That's still relevant today. Water is key to healthy people and healthy communities.

Water is also vital to our economy. We need water for manufacturing, agriculture, energy production, and more. One-fifth of the U.S. economy would come to a stop without a reliable and clean source of water.

Systems are in place to provide you with safe drinking water. The state of Minnesota and local water systems work to protect drinking water sources. For example, we might work to seal an unused well to prevent contamination of the groundwater. We treat water to remove harmful contaminants. And we do extensive testing to ensure the safety of drinking water.

If we detect a problem, we take corrective action and notify the public. Water from a public water system like yours is tested more thoroughly and regulated more closely than water from any other source, including bottled water.

## Conservation

In some parts of Minnesota, groundwater is being used faster than it can be replaced. Some agricultural regions in the state are vulnerable to drought, which can affect both crop yields and municipal water supplies.

We must learn to use water wisely. Below are some tips:

- Turn off the tap while shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Shower instead of bathing. Bathing uses more water than showering, on average.
- Only run full loads of laundry and set the washing machine to the correct water level.
- Only run the dishwasher when it's full.
- Use water-efficient appliances (look for the WaterSense label).
- Use water-friendly landscaping, such as native plants.

Mississippi River in IGH



UTILITIES DIVISION

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