

UNIT WELL #6

Drilled in 1938, Well 6 has a pumping capacity of 2,650 gallons per minute; however, the pump typically delivers 2,300 gallons per minute through the use of a variable frequency drive. The well operates year-round and primarily serves the UW campus area and Near West neighborhoods including Dudgeon-Monroe, Regent, Rocky Bluff, and Sunset Hills. In 2023, the well delivered 780 million gallons of water. The 5-year average is 561 million gallons pumped annually.

Unless otherwise noted, data contained in this report, which is updated annually, are from 2023.

Bacteria

In 2023, four quarterly samples were collected from Well 6 and tested for coliform bacteria, an indicator group of bacteria used to determine drinking water safety. Each sample was collected and tested prior to any disinfection. None of the samples had coliform bacteria present. The Water Utility chlorinates drinking water to protect against bacteria and viruses that may be present in groundwater and to provide protection as water travels through water mains and premise plumbing.

Hardness and Other Minerals

Like all groundwater, water from Unit Well 6 contains calcium and magnesium that contribute to its hardness (440 mg/L [ppm] or 26 grains per gallon). Other naturally occurring constituents that are present in water from Well 6 can be found in the [Inorganics Table](#).

Iron and Manganese

Water from Well 6 contains very low levels of iron and manganese. Both minerals are well below the US EPA [secondary standards](#), which are 0.3 mg/L for iron and 50 µg/L for manganese.

Sodium

The level of [sodium](#) in Well 6 water exceeds the EPA guideline which recommends drinking water not to exceed 20 mg/L sodium; in 2023 sodium measured 40 mg/L. These guidelines are intended for higher risk populations including some individuals with pre-existing heart conditions or those on “no salt” diets. See the WI Department of Health [website](#) for more information. Road salt likely contributes to elevated sodium levels at some Madison wells.

Chromium

Low levels of naturally occurring chromium, including hexavalent chromium, have been found at Well 6. The level is well below the drinking water standard of 100 µg/L for total chromium. More information can be found on the [chromium](#) page.

Lead

Madison's groundwater supply does not contain significant amounts of naturally occurring lead.

Radionuclides

In 2020, water from Well 6 was tested for radium-226, radium-228, and other gross measures of radiation in water. Combined radium (226+228) measured 1.2 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) - well below the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 5 pCi/L.

Naturally occurring, radioactive elements are found in rock, soil, water, and air. They derive from the creation of our planet and enter our bodies when we drink water, breathe air, and eat foods that contain them. Everyone is exposed to some level of radiation in everyday life. For example, uranium and thorium are found in rock and soil. In time, they decay to other elements including radium, which later decays to radon gas. Radon is the largest contributor of our daily exposure to radiation from the natural world. More information is available from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry ([ATSDR](#)).

See [ATSDR](#) for more information on radon.

Human-made Contaminants

Madison Water Utility annually tests all of its municipal wells for human-made contaminants that may be present in groundwater. Similar to previous years, [tetrachloroethylene](#) was detected at low levels in water from Well 6. Trace amounts of trichlorofluoromethane and three disinfection by-products (DBP) were also detected at Well 6. DBPs form when chlorine reacts with impurities in groundwater. Chlorine is added to disinfect the water and to guard against bacterial growth in water mains and premise plumbing.

The [Volatile Organic Compounds](#) table lists the substances that were tested, the results, and how detected levels compare with the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) established by the EPA.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Nine different [PFAS](#) were found at Well 6 in 2023. The combined PFAS level is **estimated at 14 ng/L or parts per trillion**. In 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources adopted drinking water standards for PFOA & PFOS set at 70 ppt. In April 2024, the US Environmental Protection Agency published final federal MCLs that were set at 4 ppt. Our website, [madisonwater.org](#), has more detailed information about PFAS in drinking water.

Additional Information

Information on routine [water quality monitoring](#) activities, including current test results and links to additional resources, is available at [madisonwater.org](#). In addition, you can sign-up to receive periodic updates on Madison drinking water quality or the water main flushing program through the [City of Madison](#) website.

If you have questions about the information in this report or on our website, our staff would be happy to answer them. Please call the Water Quality line at 266-4654 weekdays from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to view water quality reports for other Madison municipal wells.