

UNIT WELL #16

Drilled in 1967, Unit Well 16 has a pumping capacity of 2,300 gallons per minute. It operates year-round and primarily serves neighborhoods north of the Beltline Highway between Whitney Way and High Point Road. It also serves the Junction Ridge and Greentree neighborhoods. In 2023, Well 16 delivered 614 million gallons compared to its 5-year average of 505 million gallons.

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 16 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 can 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 Well 16 contains calcium and magnesium that contributes to its hardness (350 mg/L [ppm] or 20 grains per gallon). Other naturally occurring constituents that are present in water from Well 16 can be found in the [Inorganics Table](#).

Iron, Lead, and Manganese

Water from Well 16 does not contain significant amounts of iron, lead, or manganese.

Chromium

Low levels of naturally occurring chromium, including hexavalent chromium, have been found at Well 16. 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.

Sodium

The level of [sodium](#) in Well 16 water exceeds the EPA guideline which recommends drinking water not to exceed 20 mg/L sodium; in 2023, sodium measured 29 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.

Radionuclides

In 2020, water from Well 16 was tested for radium-226, radium-228, and other gross measures of radiation in water. Combined radium (226+228) measured 1.9 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 to our daily exposure of 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 wells for human-made contaminants that may be present in groundwater. None of the volatile organic compounds (VOC) tested were detected at Well 16 in 2023. However, periodic testing for [synthetic organic chemicals](#) found trace amounts of one pesticide – [atrazine](#) – for the first time in 2023.

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)

Eight different [PFAS](#) were detected at Well 16 in 2023. The combined PFAS level is **estimated at 9.7 ng/L or parts per trillion (ppt)**. 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.