

2021 Consumer Confidence Report for Belen Public Water System

Water System Name: Belen Public Water System

Water System ID: NM3524932

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(Español)

Me contiene información muy importante sobre la calidad de su agua potable. Por favor lea este informe o comuníquese con alguien que puede traducir la ón.

Is my water safe?

We are pleased to present this year's Annual Water Quality Report, or Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). This report is designed to provide details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it complies with standards set by regulatory agencies. We are committed to providing you with information on the water quality because informed customers are our best allies. Out of the contaminants tested for, only 12 were detected. Out of those 12 contaminants that were detected, only arsenic at 11ppb was above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10ppb. For more information on why the water exceeded drinking water standards, please see **Violations Table** at the end of this document and read the section titled, "**Administrative orders**".

Do I need to take special precautions?

Some people may be more vulnerable to drinking water contaminants than the general population. Examples of people who may be more susceptible are those who are immunocompromised (e.g. recently accepted an organ transplant or undergoing chemotherapy), suffering from HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, and at higher risk of infection (e.g. infants and elderly people). These people should seek advice about their drinking water from their healthcare provider. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on how to reduce the risk of exposure to Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available by calling the Safe Drinking Water hotline at **800-426-4791**.

Where does my water come from?

Belen's water supply is groundwater and it comes from wells generally located in the west part of the City along Interstate 25.

Source water assessment and its availability:

The water system's source of drinking water is protected from potential contamination based on well construction, hydrogeological settings, and system operations and management. The susceptibility rank of the entire water system is "high". This could mean any of the following: the system has a high likelihood of contamination, the system is vulnerable if contamination does occur, and the consequences are expensive in terms of public health and finances if the system cannot recover. **Consumers can contact Jeffrey Gatewood at 505-966-2730 or jeffreygatewood@belen-nm.gov.**

Where do contaminants in my drinking water come from?

Drinking water, including bottled water, is expected to contain at least trace amounts of contaminants. However, the presence of contaminants at relatively low concentrations is not a threat to human health. More information about contaminants and their potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water hotline at **800-426-4791**.

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the land surface or underground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals, which occasionally include radioactive materials. As previously mentioned, radioactive contaminants can be naturally occurring, or emerge from mining and production of oil and gas. The water can also pick up contaminants originating from animal or human activity. Harmful microorganisms can infect the water through the leaching of septic systems, runoff from sewage treatment plants, and runoff from agricultural livestock operations. Inorganic contaminants, such as metals and salts, may be naturally occurring, or may contaminate the water via urban stormwater runoff, domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and farming. Chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, can be by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production. They can also originate from urban stormwater runoff, gas stations, and septic systems. Although many of the possible avenues for contamination were mentioned, it should be noted that runoff from any contamination source is not a major concern when the drinking water source is groundwater. However, this assumes the groundwater wells are completely sealed off from the environment. In order to ensure the tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants allowed in the water.

How can I get involved?

Belen City Council meetings are held at 6pm the first and third Monday of each month.

Water conservation tips:

- Take shorter showers.
- Shut off water while brushing your teeth.
- Use a water-efficient showerhead.
- Only run your washer and dishwasher when they are full.
- Only water your plants as needed.
- Fix leaky toilets and faucets.
- Adjust your sprinklers such that only the lawn gets watered, not the sidewalk.

To learn more about how to save water and money on your next water bill, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Cross-connection control survey:

The purpose of this survey is to determine whether cross-connection exists at your home or business. A cross connection is an unprotected or improper connection to a public water distribution system, and it may cause contamination of the entire system. We are responsible for enforcing cross-connection control regulations and ensuring that no contaminants, under any flow conditions, can enter the distribution system. If you have a **boiler/radiant heater (water heater not included), underground lawn sprinkler system, other additional water sources on property, decorative pond, and/or water trough**, please contact Jeffrey Gatewood to discuss this issue. If necessary, your connection will be surveyed and possibly isolated.

Administrative orders:

Belen Public Water System has point of use (POU) treatment devices within the distribution system at the Belen Industrial Park to lower arsenic levels in the drinking water. Testing conducted in 2021 indicated that the POU devices were in compliance, however, Well 8 is producing water with 11ppb of arsenic, which is slightly above the MCL of 10ppb. The water system was issued an administrative order on September 8, 2017 for exceeding the arsenic MCL of 10 ppb. Belen has been in violation since 2011 to 2021. An arsenic treatment plant is currently under construction and expected to be put into service in summer of 2022.

Additional information on arsenic:

Consumption of elevated levels of arsenic present both acute and long-term health effects. Immediate symptoms of arsenic poisoning include vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. The aforementioned symptoms can be followed by numbness and tingling in the extremities, muscle cramping, and sometimes death. In the case of a groundwater source for drinking water, arsenic comes from the dissolution of natural rock formations as water flows through the underground aquifer. If Belen's drinking water were unsafe, the City would be forced to stop distributing it. However, the arsenic concentration is only 1ppb above the MCL of 10ppb, and the MCL itself has an adequate margin of safety. If the customer feels uncomfortable consuming the water, they can opt to drinking bottled water. For more information regarding arsenic in drinking water, call the Safe Drinking Water hotline or visit www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/chemical-contaminant-rules.

Additional information on lead:

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. In infants and children, exposure may cause delays in physical or mental development, and slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. In adults, exposure may cause kidney problems and high blood pressure. Primarily, lead in drinking water comes from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Belen Public Water System is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials and components in customers' homes. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize your risk of exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before consuming. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and ways to minimize risk of exposure can be found by calling the Safe Drinking Water hotline or visiting www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.