

Where Does my Drinking Water Come From?



Source: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Tufts drinking water is purchased from our host municipality on each campus. The cost includes drinking water delivery to campus as well as wastewater disposal. On the Boston and Medford/Somerville Campuses, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority provides drinking water service to the cities of Boston, Medford and Somerville sourced from the Quabbin Reservoir 60 miles west of Boston. On the Grafton Campus, water is purchased from the Grafton Water District from ground water wells located in Grafton.

Before reaching each campus, water is treated to disinfect it, improve dental health (MWRA only) and to reduce corrosion in plumbing. Drinking water quality is regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act that is enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Drinking water must comply with 120 standards called maximum contaminant levels which are the level of contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health.

The MWRA and Grafton Water District are responsible for complying with the maximum contaminant levels to protect human health and each produce annual report available to the public demonstrating compliance.

Once water enters Tufts buildings, Tufts must comply with the Massachusetts state plumbing code for the internal distribution systems. Drinking water testing is one of the public health programs of TEHS. Water on the Medford/Somerville and Grafton Campuses has been tested for biological, chemical and radioactive contaminants by MassDEP certified testing laboratories.

Periodically members of the Tufts community experience issues with water quality. TEHS is available to provide advice to ensure that everyone receives high quality drinking water for personal consumption as well as for research uses. Often we find that routine water system maintenance by the municipality may cause temporary issues such as discolored or cloudy water that can be remedied by running the faucet for a few extra seconds.

We believe that we are fortunate to have high quality drinking water at Tufts delivered by our host communities. Maintaining drinking water infrastructure results in high system reliability and high quality water; both of which are important to the health of the Tufts community and the ability to complete Tufts research and teaching mission without interruptions.