

Our Mission

Our goal is to provide free analysis of drinking water, and to better educate the community about drinking water and its possible contaminants. For this project, we will be analyzing for the heavy metals lead, copper, and zinc.

About Us

Following the well-known lead contamination problems with the water system in Flint, Michigan and elsewhere, there has been a heightened public awareness of drinking water quality. New York State has mandated that all NYS public schools test their drinking water systems for lead. Private colleges, businesses, and individual homeowners were not included in that mandate. Therefore, as a service to the community, the Geology Department has established the Union College Water Initiative (UCWI). We supply the bottles and instructions, you supply water from your drinking water taps.



Contact Us

Union College Faculty Advisor:
hollochk@union.edu

Address:

UCWI, Geology Department, Olin 310, Union College, 807 Union St., Schenectady, NY 12308

Phone: 518-388-6770 or
518-388-6518

Website:

<http://minerva.union.edu/hollochk/water/index.html>

Resources:

NYS Drinking Water Protection Program:
<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/>
NYS Annual Water Quality Report:
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/annual_water_quality_report/
NYS Lead Testing of School Drinking Water:
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm
USEPA National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water>

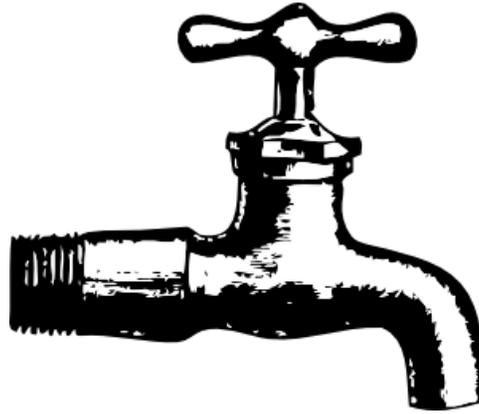


The Union College Water Initiative (UCWI)



Current Rules and Regulations

Almost 95% of New Yorkers receive water from public water systems (Department of Health). Water contamination is something all communities need to be aware of. Upstate New York is an area with lots of old industrial towns and cities, and therefore lots of old buildings and pipes. In 1974, Congress addressed this nation-wide with the Clean Water Act, which authorized containment level goals (MCLGs) for different contaminants in public drinking water supplies, like the Schenectady water system. To address these goals, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed a series of public drinking water standards and treatment guidelines. For example the maximum limits for lead and copper are set at 15 and 1300 parts per billion, respectively. Many people's water comes from private wells, and most heavy metal drinking water contamination comes from piping in and adjacent to individual buildings. That is why sampling your own water is so important.



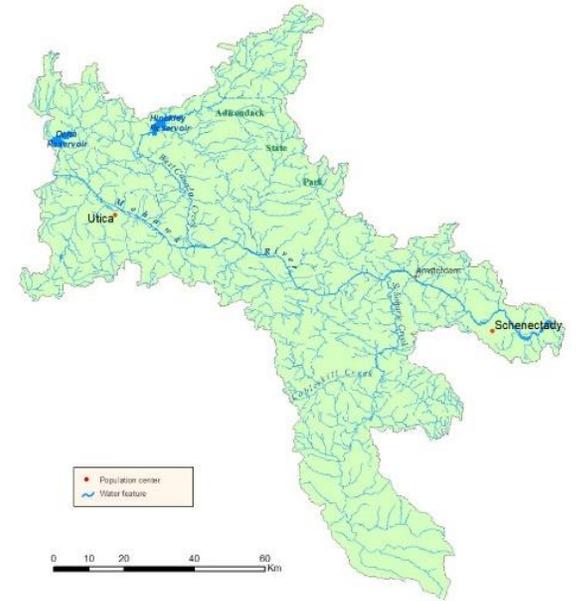
Lead and Copper Health Effects

Lead contamination can have severe consequences because of the effects it can have on small children and adolescents. It can cause damage to the nervous system, shorter stature, learning disabilities, and impaired formation and function of blood cells (EPA) Copper is an essential element that is necessary for good health, but in high dosages can have adverse effects. A small portion of the population is particularly sensitive to copper toxicity. A great solution the UCWI has found is carbon filters.

Disclaimer

Our analyses are for informational purposes only, as we are not a certified lab.

The Schenectady Public Water System



<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/53752.html>

Schenectady gets its water from the Great Flats Aquifer, which underlies the Mohawk River channel and surrounding flat areas. This aquifer is of very high quality.

Sampling Kits

To get your water sampled, call or email the UCWI to get a sampling kit. You will get three bottles with an instruction sheet.