

NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES / NEW MEXICO TECH  
801 LEROY PLACE, SOCORRO, NM 87801

Bonnie Frey, Lab Manager Phone: 575-835-5160 Email: bonnie.frey@nmt.edu

**WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND HEALTH ADVISORIES from US EPA and the State of New Mexico  
(updated July 2022)**

**Guidelines for comparison only!**

All values are in mg/L. (milligrams per liter = parts per million)

PARAMETER	DRINKING WATER <sup>(1, 4)</sup>	GROUND WATER <sup>(2)</sup>	SURFACE WATER Domestic Water Supply <sup>(3)</sup>	STOCK <sup>(3)</sup>	IRRIGATION <sup>(2, 3, 5)</sup>
Chloride	250 (s)	250			
Sulfate	250 (s)	600			
Nitrate as NO <sub>3</sub>	44 (e)	44	44		
Nitrite as NO <sub>2</sub>	3 (e)	3			
Fluoride	4 (e), 2.0 (s)	1.6			
Sodium <sup>(1)</sup>	20***				
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)	500 (s)	1000			<450* no effects 450-2000* increasing problems >2000* severe limitations
Hardness <sup>(4)</sup> **	0-60 = soft 61-120 = moderately hard 121-180 = hard >180 = very hard				
pH	6.5 to 8.5 (s)	6 to 9			
<b>TRACE METALS</b>					
Aluminum	0.05 to 0.2 (s)				5.0
Antimony	0.006 (e)	0.006	0.006		
Arsenic	0.01 (e)	0.01	0.01	0.2	0.1
Barium	2 (e)	2	2.0		
Beryllium	0.004 (e)	0.004	0.004		
Boron	7 (ha)			5.0	0.75
Cadmium	0.005 (e)	0.005	0.005	0.05	0.01
Chromium (total)	0.1 (e)	0.05	0.1	1.0	0.1
Cobalt				1.0	0.05
Copper	1.3 (g, AL), 1.0 (s)	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.2
Iron	0.3 (s)	1.0			
Lead	0.015 (AL)	0.015	0.015	0.1	5
Manganese	0.05 (s), 0.3 (lha)	0.2			
Mercury (inorganic)	0.002 (e)	0.002	0.002	0.01	
Molybdenum	0.2 (ha)				1.0
Nickel	0.7 (ha)		0.7		0.2
Selenium	0.05 (e)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.13
Silver	0.1 (s), 0.2 (ha)	0.05			
Thallium	0.002 (e)	0.002	0.002		
Uranium	0.03 (e)	0.03	0.03		
Vanadium				0.1	0.1
Zinc	5 (s), 10 (ha)	10.0	10.5	25	2

References:

- USEPA, 2018 Edition of the Drinking Water Standards and Health Advisories Tables, March 2018  
<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-01/dwtable2018.pdf>
  - New Mexico standards for groundwater of 10,000 mg/l TDS or less (20.6.2 NMAC, section 3103)  
<https://www.env.nm.gov/gwqb/gw-regulations/>
  - New Mexico water quality standards for interstate and intrastate surface waters (20.6.4.900 J NMAC)  
<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-12/documents/nmwqs.pdf>
  - <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/hardness.html>
  - [http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/\\_w/W102/welcome.html](http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_w/W102/welcome.html)
- New Mexico Dept. of Health: <https://nmtracking.org/water> or 505-827-0006 (hotline number verified July 2022)  
Other useful information is available at <https://www.eras.com/wqtool/>

Key:

- (s) - secondary drinking water regulation, nonenforceable guideline regarding cosmetic or aesthetic effects
- (e) - maximum contaminant level (MCL); an enforceable standard for the highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water
- (ha) - USEPA health advisory of acceptable drinking water levels for a chemical substance based on health effects information, expressed as a drinking water equivalent level (DWEL)
- (lha) - USEPA health advisory of acceptable drinking water levels for a chemical substance based on health effects information, expressed as a lifetime health advisory
- (AL) - USEPA action level for lead and copper in tap water, related to corrosion of household plumbing --  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/documents/lcr101\\_factsheet\\_10.9.19.final\\_.2.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/documents/lcr101_factsheet_10.9.19.final_.2.pdf)

\* Recommendation only.

\*\* Provided for reference only, not an official standard or advisory

\*\*\* EPA guidance level for individuals restricted to a total sodium intake of 500 mg/day (see reference 1 above, page 12).