

UNIT WELL #27

Drilled in 1989, Unit Well 27 has a pumping capacity of 1,800 gallons per minute; however, the pump typically delivers 1,550 gallons per minute using a variable frequency drive. It primarily serves neighborhoods south and east of the UW campus including homes in Dudgeon-Monroe, Greenbush, Vilas, South Campus, and State-Langdon neighborhoods. In 2025, Well 27 pumped 158 million gallons compared to its 5-year average of 284 million gallons annually.

Unless otherwise noted, data contained in this report, which is updated annually, are from 2025.

Bacteria

In 2025, four samples were collected from Well 27 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 tap water to protect against bacteria and viruses that may 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 27 contains calcium and magnesium that contributes to its hardness (370 mg/L [ppm] or 22 grains per gallon). Other naturally occurring substances that are present in water from Well 27 can be found in the [Inorganics Table](#).

Iron and Manganese

Water from Well 27 contains intermediate levels of both iron and manganese, two minerals that at elevated levels can discolor the water. The EPA [secondary standards](#) for iron and manganese are 0.3 mg/L and 50 µg/L, respectively. Water containing iron or manganese above these levels may cause staining of laundry or plumbing fixtures.

Instances of discolored water are random, infrequent, and temporary; the water usually clears up in 15-30 minutes without additional action. Running a lower-level cold water tap at full force for a few minutes usually clears the minerals that cause the discoloration. If the color persists, call the Water Utility at 608-266-4654. You should not use discolored water for drinking or cooking; rather run the water until it clears.

Sodium

The level of [sodium](#) in Well 27 is approaching an EPA guideline which recommends drinking water not exceed 20 mg/L sodium. 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.

Chromium

Tests have not found hexavalent chromium at Well 27. Chromium is known to be present in the aquifer; however, it is believed that the chemical environment in the Mt. Simon aquifer inhibits the release of chromium into groundwater. More information is found on the [chromium](#) page.

Lead

Madison's groundwater supply does not contain significant amounts of naturally occurring lead.

Radionuclides

In 2025, Well 27 was tested three times for radium. The combined radium (226+228) ranged from 3.8 to 4.6 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). Radium sometimes tests higher than 5 pCi/L, however, compliance with the drinking water standard is based on the running annual average (RAA), which must stay below 5 pCi/L. The RAA at Well 27 ranged from 3.8 to 3.9 pCi/L in 2024.

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 municipal wells for human-made contaminants that may be present in groundwater. Except for four disinfection by-products (DBP), no other volatile organic compound (VOC) was detected at Well 27 in 2025. DBPs form when chlorine interacts with impurities in groundwater. Chlorine is added to guard against bacterial growth in water mains.

The [Volatile Organic Compounds](#) table lists the substances that were tested, the results, and how the detected levels compare with the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) established by the EPA.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

No [PFAS](#) were found at Well 27 in 2025. In April 2024, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published final MCLs for six PFAS. Our website, [madisonwater.org](#), has more detailed information on PFAS in drinking water and previous PFAS tests results for this well.

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.