



Altus AFB Drinking Water FAQ's

- People that have lived in Altus for a while remember getting letters about poor water quality. Why don't we get those letters anymore?
- Is the Altus AFB water safe to drink?
- Is the water safe to drink for my infant?
- Do I need to have a filter or reverse osmosis (RO) system installed in my house?
- I got a water test kit in the mail that I sent in and the company is recommending that I install a whole house water filter.
- My friend that lives off base got a letter about a TTHM violation. Why didn't I get the same letter on base?
- Does Altus fluorinate the water distribution system?
- Why does the water come out of my faucet brown?
- Why does my water smell like bleach?
- I read a Military Times article that said Altus AFB drinking water is contaminated with PFOS/PFOA. Is that true?
- What is the difference between ground water and drinking water?
- My shower head and faucets have a scale buildup, what does that mean for the quality?

Further questions regarding Altus AFB water quality can be directed to Bioenvironmental Engineering at 580-481-5494

Or visit:

<https://www.altus.af.mil/About-Us/Altus-AFB-Water-Quality/>



People that have lived in Altus for a while remember getting letters about poor water quality. Why don't we get those letters anymore?

- Oklahoma requires water distribution system owners to notify consumers of any violations of Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requirements. Altus AFB receives water directly from the City of Altus Water Treatment Plan. From 2013 until 2016, the city of Altus was above the specified limits for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs). After showing sustained compliance for a year, the violations were lifted in April 2017 and we have maintained that compliance ever since. This is why there are no longer water quality letters delivered.

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Is the Altus AFB water safe to drink?

- Yes, the water is absolutely safe to drink. The Altus water system has met all SDWA requirements since the violations were lifted in 2017.

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Is the water safe to drink for my infant?

- Consult with your pediatrician regarding any recommendations for infant consumption.

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Do I need to have a filter or reverse osmosis (RO) system installed in my house?

- The short answer is no. The water coming into your home is clean and potable. That said, there are a number of factors that may affect the color, taste, or smell of your water. Usually, allowing water faucets to run for several minutes can alleviate these issues; however, it is perfectly reasonable to use commercially available water filters to improve these issues if you desire.

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I got a water test kit in the mail that I sent in and the company is recommending that I install a whole house water filter.

- Some companies will send free test kits in the mail as a marketing strategy. Their purpose is to sell in-home drinking water filters. It is important to understand what those kits are testing for before making any assumptions about the quality of water being delivered to your residence.

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My friend that lives off base got a letter about a TTHM violation. Why didn't I get the same letter on base?

- Each distribution system owner is required to monitor TTHM levels and report Notices of Violations (NOV's) to customers. Individuals that live outside Altus AFB or the City of Altus may be part of neighboring distribution system with different water quality conditions.

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Does Altus fluorinate the water distribution system?

- Altus AFB and the City of Altus currently do not fluorinate the distribution system; however, there is a small amount of natural fluoride in the water.

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Why does the water come out of my faucet brown?

- Any time there is a water main break or if the city performs fire hydrant testing in your local area, natural scale that builds up within the pipes can break loose and be delivered through the service lines into a residence. If you experience discolored water, run the taps in your home until the water returns to normal. It is recommended that you also, empty your ice machine and run an empty load of laundry to flush residual sediment that may have been trapped in the water lines.

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Why does my water smell like bleach?

- Chlorine, the disinfectant used for treating water within the distribution system, has a bleach like odor. This is normal and there is no need for additional action. If the odor is excessive, flush your house faucets until the odor subsides.

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I read a Military Times article that said Altus AFB drinking water is contaminated with Perfluorooctane sulfonate/perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOS/PFOA). Is that true?

- In this case it is important to clarify the difference between contaminated ground water and contaminated drinking water. While there were measured levels of PFOS/PFOA from firefighting foam found in the ground water below Altus AFB, neither drinking water sources used by the City of Altus and Altus AFB (Tom Steed Reservoir and the Round Timbre Ranch wells) have been affected. The Civil Engineering Squadron continues tracking the plumes below ground and the Air Force is working on a strategy for future remediation.

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What is the difference between ground water and drinking water?

- Ground water is untreated and typically from a well or aquifer. Drinking water, is water that has been treated and is intended for potable use and consumption. Drinking water and ground water have two very different standards.

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My shower head and faucets have a scale buildup, what does that mean for the quality?

The City of Altus receives a portion of its drinking water from ground water. Ground water has higher levels of dissolved solids and minerals that can cause buildup on faucets and appliances. Commercial off-the-shelf descaling chemicals are an excellent way to remove scale buildup.

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