

FACT SHEET Microplastics

- **Microplastics are part of an emerging area of research** in drinking water. At this time, there is no federal drinking water regulation for microplastics, and the EPA is still developing standardized sampling and analytical methods.
- **Microplastics are very small plastic particles**, generally measuring less than 5 millimeters in size. For reference, 5 millimeters is about the height of three stacked U.S. quarters. Microplastics may also occur at the nanoscale; 1 nanometer is far smaller than the human eye can see, and a strand of human hair is about 80,000 nanometers wide. Some microplastics are intentionally manufactured at small sizes, while others are created when larger plastic materials break down.^{1,3}
- **Common pathways for microplastics** to enter the water system include the breakdown of plastic litter, industrial or wastewater discharges, stormwater runoff, tire wear particles, and synthetic fibers from clothing and other textiles during the wash process.^{2,3}
- EPA scientists are studying how microplastics may affect human health and aquatic life. More research is still needed in this area.^{1,4}
- EPA has identified microplastics as a contaminant of emerging concern and included them on its draft Contaminant Candidate List 6 (CCL6). Contaminants on the CCL6 are not currently subject to national primary drinking water regulations, but they may require future regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.⁶
- **EPA has not yet established a standardized method** for the monitoring of microplastics in drinking water and microplastics are not currently regulated. Therefore, Beaver Water District has not performed regulatory sampling or analysis for microplastics.⁵
- **Beaver Water District continues to follow EPA guidance** and monitor emerging research related to microplastics in drinking water.
- **Protecting source water remains important.** Reducing plastic pollution and keeping waste out of the environment are practical ways to help protect drinking water supplies.^{2,3}

[1 EPA Microplastics Research](#)

[2 EPA About Plastic Products and Pollution](#)

[3 EPA Learn About Aquatic Trash](#)

[4 EPA Impacts of Plastic Pollution](#)

[5 EPA Drinking Water Workshop: Session 5B](#)

[6 EPA Draft Contaminant Candidate List 6](#)

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About Beaver Water District

Beaver Water District supplies drinking water to people and industries in Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville and surrounding areas. These cities then resell the water to surrounding towns and communities. The District's mission is to sustainably provide our customers with safe, economical drinking water. For more information, visit www.bwdh2o.org.