



What We Do

The first barrier we have in keeping your drinking water safe is our four separate intakes that are located several miles offshore and pull water from deeper in the lake that is less affected by runoff, pollutants, and activities on shore. From there, the water goes through a 10-step treatment process to make it clean and safe to drink.

We also monitor the condition of Lake Erie using four, state-of-the-art water quality buoys. These buoys are like floating laboratories and enable us to track in real time and quickly respond to water conditions that could affect drinking water quality.



Cleveland Water

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Cleveland Water

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION



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Protecting Lake Erie – our source of drinking water – and its watershed is an essential part of providing safe, affordable tap water to our customers. Our treatment process produces safe drinking water every day, but it's easier and less costly if we're starting with a clean and healthy source.



Lake Erie & its Watershed

Lake Erie is the source of drinking for our 1.4 million customers as well as 11 million people in the U.S. and Canada. Lake Erie is a surface water source. As such, it's more susceptible to contamination from natural or human-made activities, like runoff or a chemical spill, but it also recovers quickly due to its high water volume.

The health of Lake Erie is directly affected by its watershed, which is comprised of the rivers and tributaries that drain water from the surrounding land into the lake. The Lake Erie Watershed drains 30,140 square miles of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Canadian province of Ontario, as well as the upstream Great Lakes. The Lake Erie watershed is the most populated of all the Great Lakes basins and therefore Lake Erie is exposed to the greatest stress from urbanization, industrialization and agriculture.



Types of Pollution

All rainfall, snowmelt, and water runoff in the Lake Erie Watershed – and any pollutant carried with it – travels into storm drains and waterways like the Cuyahoga River, Rocky River, Doan Brook, or Euclid Creek, and eventually ends up in the lake.







These pollutants ultimately affect Lake Erie's water quality and ecosystem. Water pollution is categorized as "point source" or "nonpoint source" pollution.

Point source pollution can be traced to a specific location, like a discharge pipe from a factory or wastewater treatment plant. Point source pollution is usually subject to state and federal regulation.

Nonpoint source pollution comes from many, nonspecific sources. For example, rainwater runoff carrying fertilizer and pesticides from farm fields or litter from city streets. Nonpoint source pollution is harder to identify and harder to address. It's also the leading cause of water quality problems in Lake Erie.

What You Can Do

Our everyday actions at home, school, or work affect the quality of our source water and the health of its watershed. There are simple actions we can all take to help protect our local waterways and Lake Erie.

-  Reduce your use of disposable, single-use plastics by replacing items like grocery bags, water bottles, and to-go utensils with reusable options.
-  Install a rain barrel to collect and reuse water runoff from your house, which can reduce your water bill and reduces stormwater runoff.
-  Pick up litter and pet waste. Not only are you keeping your neighborhood beautiful, you're also keeping trash out of local waterways and Lake Erie.
-  Limit use of pesticides and fertilizers and always follow the label directions. Find out your soil type to determine what types of nutrients, if any, your soil needs before applying fertilizer to your lawn or garden.
-  Properly use and dispose of hazardous household chemicals and medications. Don't pour hazardous waste down the drain, on the ground, or into storm sewers. Follow local guidelines for trash and recycling and look for hazardous waste drop-off or collection events for safe disposal.
-  Landscape with native plants and trees. Native plants are good for local wildlife and are easier and less costly to maintain since they are adapted to the Ohio climate.
-  Plant trees, grass, or shrubs to prevent soil erosion and reduce impermeable surfaces. This reduces stormwater runoff and stress on sewer infrastructure.
-  Get involved with local watershed groups and organizations working to protect and restore our waterways.