

## #10: DRINKING WATER

### OPTIONAL METRIC FOR CATEGORY A & B & C COMMUNITIES

**Bold, green font indicates metrics that must improve to be recognized at Step 5**

#### METRICS

- 10.1 **Residential gallons used per person per day** (gallons/person/day)
- 10.2 **Non-residential gallons used per job per day** (gallons/job/day)
- 10.3 a. **Annual government operations' gallons: summer** (gallons/year)  
b. **Annual government operations' gallons: non-summer** (gallons/year)
- 10.4 Ratio of maximum day use to average daily use (peak:average)
- 10.5 Annual energy used per million gallons water distributed (MMBtus)
- 10.6 Annual cost in dollars spent per million gallons of water distributed (\$/million gallons)
- 10.7 **Percent of annual losses in drinking water system** (%)
- 10.8 Trend of source water levels: falling, stable, or rising (falling, stable, or rising)

See [CO2e Guidance Document](#) for Metrics G and H

#### METRIC DEFINITION

- **Exclude water used by other water withdrawal permit holders within the jurisdiction**, unless you note in your submittal to GreenStep that your utility comprehensively tracks and includes this data. Other permit holders include residences with private wells or commercial, industrial, or agricultural uses with separate use permits. Public data exists only for users withdrawing more than 10,000 gallons of water per day or 1 million gallons per year. ([Metric 10.1](#))
- **Non-residential gallons** include water sold to commercial, industrial, and institutional accounts within the city or jurisdiction limits. ([Metric 10.2](#))
- **For government operations**, use of water during the typical landscape irrigation/community pool months of June through October will dwarf water use for government buildings, and so data for November through May water use is a reasonable proxy for baseline water use by buildings. Feel free to use more precise data if it exists. ([Metric 10.3](#))
- **Peak daily use to average daily use** is a standard ratio reported to the MN DNR in public water supply plans. ([Metric 10.4](#))
- **Include water losses in gallons used** by residences and by commercial/industrial/institutional accounts. Note that Regional Indicators Initiative data on water use do not include water lost to distribution leakage so as to most accurately represent actual consumption/use by people and use by businesses. ([Metric 10.7](#))
- **Include wholesale water volumes** - water sold to users not within utility boundaries – only when calculating percent of losses, MMBtu (million Btus) and dollars per million gallons of water distributed, and trend data. ([Metrics 10.5 - 10.8](#))
- **Alternative metrics**: if you have been gathering or want to gather different metrics, report those and explain why they are a better fit for your community.

#### DATA SOURCES

- City, tribal, or utility records ([Metrics 10.1 – 10.8](#))
- For cities listed on Regional Indicators Initiative; note the RII commercial/industrial category combines businesses and city operations gallons: <https://www.regionalindicatorsmn.com/water-chart> ([Metric 10.1 and 10.2](#))

## Minnesota GreenStep Cities & Tribal Nations Performance Metrics for Recognition at Steps 4 and 5

- Select dataset “water by sector”
- 10.1 – change normalization to “per capita/day” and record the number for residential
- 10.2 – change normalization to “per job/day” and record the number for commercial & industrial
- Not all GSCs are listed on RII. If you are, use the most recent year’s data available (change the year by the dropdown)
- Jobs data from North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and the Quarterly Census of Employment Wages (QCEW); use Quarter 2 data, as it tends to be least affected by seasonal fluctuation: <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/qcew/ResultsDisp.aspx> (Metric 10.2)
- B3 water tab data: <https://mn.b3benchmarking.com> (Metrics 10.1 - 10.3; 10.5 and 10.6)
- Infrastructure Stress Transparency Tool (MN State Auditor): <https://www.osa.state.mn.us/reports-data-analysis/data/infrastructure-stress-transparency-tool/infrastructure-stress-transparency-tool/> (Metrics 10.1, 10.2, 10.6)
- City Water Supply Plan submitted to the MN Dept. of Natural Resources (Metrics 10.4, 10.8)

### METRIC CALCULATION AND PUBLIC REPORTING

- **Annual measurement and reporting** for these metrics is for the calendar year before the reporting year. (Metrics 10.1-10.8)
- **If a community purchases all of its water** from another city/water service, do not report source water trends. (Metrics 10.1 – 10.7)
- **For a community that produces only some of its water**, report numbers based on the utility data only. (Metrics 10.1 - 10.8)
- **Residential and non-residential gallons** use the past year of data to average out variation in the data due to seasonal change. Non-residential gallons are normalized by jobs so as to identify whether in aggregate businesses are high or low water users. Exclude wholesale gallons sold to users outside the community. (Metrics 10.1 and 10.2)
- **Government operations’ gallons** – one number for summer use (June-October) and one for non-summer use (mostly by buildings: November – May) – can be tracked on the water tab of a city’s B3 database. Feel free to use more precise data: gallons/year for non-building uses and gallons/year for internal water use in city buildings. Exclude wholesale gallons. (Metric 10.3)
- **Use 10 years of data (or fewer) to calculate ratio of maximum day use to average daily use.** (1) add up the highest daily number of gallons distributed during each of the past 10 years; (2) divide that number by 10, and divide that number (the average peak demand day averaged over 10 years) by (3) total gallons distributed over the past 10 years, divided by 10 and then divided by 365. Exclude wholesale gallons. (Metric 10.4)
- **MMBtu** = millions of British Thermal Units of energy. Water systems using electricity (tracked in kilowatt-hours: kWh) and liquid fuels (generally tracked in BTUs) should convert all energy use to the common metric MMBtus. Include wholesale gallons. For energy conversions use [http://www.eia.gov/Energyexplained/index.cfm?page=about\\_energy\\_conversion\\_calculator](http://www.eia.gov/Energyexplained/index.cfm?page=about_energy_conversion_calculator) (Metric 10.5)
- **Annual cost in dollars spent per million gallons of water distributed:** total energy (dollars), divide by total gallons distributed over the past 12 months (include wholesale gallons), and divide by 1,000,000. (Metric 10.6)
- **Dollars per million gallons** = the operating cost to distribute each one million gallons. Use dollars and gallons for the most recent one year period, or set a protocol to use cumulative data from a rolling 3 or 5 year (or greater) time period. Include wholesale gallons. Include depreciation costs but exclude one-time capital costs. Note that the State Auditor’s Infrastructure Tools reports 3 data points for a city’s drinking water enterprise fund: very useful for fiscal sustainability but different than this GreenStep metric. (Metric 10.6)

- **Percent losses** (percent unaccounted for, or non-revenue water) = last years' gallons of water produced (withdrawals from all sources) minus gallons of water sales, divided by annual gallons of water produced. Include wholesale gallons. Losses are leakage on transmission and distribution mains, leakage and overflows at utility storage tanks, and leakage on service connections up to the point of customer metering. Included also is unbilled metered water (not a good practice). ([Metric 10.7](#))
- **The trend of all source water levels should be reported as Falling, Stable, or Rising:** a composite indicator for all production wells, observation wells, and source water intakes or reservoirs tracked and reported to the MN DNR in your utility's Water Supply Plan. Determine a protocol that makes sense for your unique water supply or supplies. For example, if all your water comes from one aquifer, you may decide to compare water table height changes every 3 years and report the trend as Falling or Rising if the variance is more than 2 inches. Or with multiple surface and groundwater supplies you may factor in percentage of water coming from each and annual variation and then use a 5-yr. rolling average of change to report a long-term trend in water levels. Include wholesale gallons. ([Metric 10.8](#))

### METRIC RATIONALE

Potable water use is a growing concern primarily due to the large proportion of cities using groundwater, which often takes decades and centuries to replenish. About 75% of Minnesota's drinking water comes from ground water. In addition, there are increasing risks to both surface and groundwater sources posed by droughts that are exacerbated by climate change. Water use tracking allows more effective water conservation and water reuse efforts by the city, residents and businesses. Conservation efforts importantly "peak-shave:" reduce the highest water use day during each year, which effectively adds capacity to city infrastructure and potentially allows cities to reduce the amount of infrastructure that is required to meet the peak day use. This infrastructure includes new wells and new water towers, which can be costly items.

Water extraction, treatment, and distribution systems can constitute a major portion of energy consumption by city operations and can offer great opportunities for efficiency improvements. For example, the withdrawal, treatment, storage, and distribution of potable water in the City of Burnsville in 2013 resulted in 58% of the electricity consumption and 42% of the greenhouse gas emissions from city operations. Energy efficiency improvements to the city's drinking water treatment plant enabled it to increase its production of potable water in 2011 by 25% over 2009 levels, while reducing electricity consumption 46%.

Drinking water quality is a highly regulated area; under federal law, water utilities are required to routinely send community members a summary of the extensive testing for contaminants that, depending on the part of the state, report on contaminants such as arsenic, lead, chloride (salt), and nitrate. In central Minnesota, for example, up to 60% of drinking water monitoring wells sampled in 2016 were contaminated with nitrate levels well-beyond the safe drinking water standard. Such an affected community may wish to track and report nitrates so as to highlight improvement toward lower levels. At this point in time GreenStep has not one index number that would attempt to capture the health status of drinking water that all cities would report.

For groundwater quality, however, GreenStep may add a measure that tracks the irreversible contamination of aquifers by chloride, introduced primarily from the use of road salt. As of 2015 30% of private wells in the Twin Cities metro area were considered impaired by too much chloride.

### STEP 5 METRIC TARGETS

Individual communities are best equipped to set realistic goals for metric improvement, and any improvement in the metrics is good. That said, the [Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#) suggests the following metric goals:

Residential gallons used per person per day  
Ratio of peak day use to average day use

**75 or fewer**  
**2.5 or less**

Percent of losses

**10% or less**

(Much lower percentages are possible: the City of Hugo, for example, reported 2016 losses in their drinking water system of only 2.7%.)

LEED FOR CITIES & COMMUNITIES CRITERIA

<https://www.usgbc.org/leed/rating-systems/leed-for-cities-communities>

**WE Prerequisite: Water Performance**

- Measure the daily per capita domestic water consumption within the city. Domestic water consumption must be calculated for one whole calendar year within the last 5 years.
- Obtain a minimum water performance score of 40 (use Arc reporting tool)

**WE Credit: Integrated Water Management**

- Water Availability Assessment
  - Assess the total quantity of water available for use to the city.
- Water Demand
  - Report on total water demand for all of the following sectors and use types present within the city, for past twelve consecutive months (one full year):
    - Buildings – All use types such as residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings under the public and private sector.
    - Landscaping for public spaces such as parks, alongside roadways and open spaces.
    - Any other sectors as applicable to the city.

**WE Credit: Smart Water Systems**

- Option 1: Water Audit
  - Undertake water audit at least once a year to meet all of the following requirements:
    - Address water use inventory, smart metering and water efficiency.
    - Measure the amount of municipal water available and total water utilized from both municipal water supply and other sources.
    - System efficiency and root-cause analysis for water losses, leaks and infiltration.
    - Identify strategies for improving system efficiency.

**EN Credit: Energy Efficiency**

- Option 3: Water and Wastewater
  - Demonstrate reduction in the energy intensity of water and wastewater systems, including water supply pumping, treatment, distribution as well as wastewater pumping, and treatment, from a baseline year no more than five years prior to the most recent reporting year.

**NS Prerequisite: Ecosystem Assessment**

- 4. Hydrology and Aquatic Ecosystems:
  - Wetlands, lakes, beaches and streams; degraded waterbodies
  - Watershed health, potable and non-potable water sources

RELATED BEST PRACTICE ACTIONS

- [20.1](#) Compare the **energy use and financial performance** of your facilities with other peer facilities using standardized, free tools.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities & Tribal Nations  
Performance Metrics for Recognition at Steps 4 and 5

- [20.3](#) Establish an on-going budget and program for decreasing **inflow and infiltration** into sewer lines and **losses in drinking water systems**.

[NEED HELP? CONTACT](#)

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