

Water Sources and Treatment

Customers of the Onondaga County Water Authority receive water that originates from Otisco Lake, Lake Ontario, or Skaneateles Lake. Customers located in certain areas may get a mixture of these waters or their source water may vary with changes in seasonal demand. In 2021, OCWA supplied approximately 35.24 million gallons per day to its 340,000 residential customers located in suburban Onondaga County, and parts of Madison, Oneida, Oswego, and Cayuga counties. OCWA also supplies water daily to thirty-four large industrial customers and two municipal wholesale water customers. OCWA can also supply water on an intermittent or emergency basis to seven additional municipal water systems.

OCWA treats and delivers water from Otisco Lake, the easternmost and smallest Finger Lake. In 2021, approximately 16.93 million gallons per day or 48.0 % of OCWA's water came from Otisco Lake. The customers receiving water originating from Otisco Lake are mostly located in the southern and western half of Onondaga County.

OCWA also treats and delivers water from Lake Ontario. The Ontario Water Treatment Plant treats water originating from Lake Ontario. In 2021, approximately 17.34 million gallons per day or 49.2 % of OCWA's water came from Lake Ontario. The customers receiving water originating from Lake Ontario are mostly located in the northern and eastern half of Onondaga County. OCWA customers in Madison, Oneida, Oswego, and Cayuga counties receive all their water from Lake Ontario.

The City of Syracuse Water Department is responsible for treating and delivering water originating from Skaneateles Lake. In 2021, approximately 0.98 million gallons per day or 2.8 % of OCWA's water came from Skaneateles Lake water purchased from the City of Syracuse Water Department through various supply connections. OCWA uses this water to supplement areas close to the city boundary when needed. OCWA customers living in Nedrow, Southwood, and the Jamesville area, get water from Skaneateles Lake exclusively.

The first step in water treatment is to protect the source. Both OCWA and the City of Syracuse have ongoing watershed protection programs in place. These programs are carried out in cooperation with the State and Onondaga County Departments of Health. OCWA and the City of Syracuse both monitor lake conditions at regular intervals prior to treatment.

The New York State Department of Health completes Source Water Assessments to better recognize potential sources of contaminants for every water source used throughout the State. This assessment as it relates to OCWA can be found in this report under the heading **SWAP Summary for OCWA** on Page 9.

OCWA's Otisco Lake Water Treatment Plant has two intake pipes located in Otisco Lake. The water entering these pipes is immediately disinfected with either sodium hypochlorite or chlorine dioxide to discourage the growth of zebra mussels. The water then travels, by gravity, approximately five miles to OCWA's Otisco Water Treatment Plant located in Marcellus, NY. Water first enters the rapid mix tank where a coagulant (polyaluminum chloride) is added. After 30 seconds of mixing, the water enters the contact basins where the calm conditions allow the coagulant to make the small particles adhere together, forming larger particles. Some of these particles settle and are cleaned out later. The contact time in these basins also allows the powdered activated carbon (used only when

needed) to adsorb organic taste and odor causing chemicals. After about one hour of contact time the water enters the filters. Particles are removed as the water passes through one of six multimedia filters. These filters consist of granular activated carbon, silica-sand, and hi-density sand. The filters are washed when needed and the water used to do this is collected in lagoons and allowed to settle. It is then recycled back to the start of the treatment plant to be treated again. After filtration, the water is again disinfected with sodium hypochlorite and fluoride is added. The water is stored in large tanks located at the treatment plant to provide adequate contact time for the chlorine to work. Once the water leaves the tanks, orthophosphate is added to provide a coating for the pipes in the distribution system and in your home. This is done to prevent the leaching of lead and copper from your pipes into your water.

OCWA's Ontario Water Treatment Plant pumps water from Lake Ontario through an eight-foot diameter intake it shares with the City of Oswego. Upon entering the raw water pumping station, lake water is treated with carbon dioxide to suppress pH thereby increasing the effectiveness of chemical coagulation. Potassium permanganate is applied seasonally to the water for taste and odor control and to discourage the growth of zebra mussels. The water is pumped approximately two miles to OCWA's Ontario Water Treatment Plant. Water entering the plant is treated with sodium hypochlorite (disinfectant) and polyaluminum chloride (coagulant) and is flash mixed. The water then enters three contact basins where slow mixing allows small particles to accumulate and form larger, more readily filtered particles. After about two hours of contact time, the water flows into dual media filters consisting of granular activated carbon and filter sand whereby particulate contaminants are removed. After filtration three treatments are applied: fluoride to reduce tooth decay, sodium hypochlorite to disinfect, and sodium hydroxide for corrosion control.

The City of Syracuse does not filter the water that enters its intakes located in Skaneateles Lake. The city has been granted a waiver to provide its customers with unfiltered water subject to strict conditions set by the New York State Department of Health. These conditions include water quality monitoring, backup disinfection, and watershed protection. The City of Syracuse Water Plant, located in the Village of Skaneateles, is where they disinfect with chlorine and add fluoride. Water then flows by gravity into the City's storage reservoirs. Orthophosphate is added to the water (for corrosion control) as it leaves the reservoirs, and it is disinfected again by the addition of sodium hypochlorite. In 2013, an Ultraviolet Light Treatment Facility was put into operation at Westcott Reservoir. A UV Light Treatment Facility at Woodland Reservoir was completed in April 2014. Ultraviolet disinfection allows the City to strengthen protection against microbial contaminants, especially targeting cryptosporidium.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activities. Contaminants that may be present in source waters are microbial contaminants; inorganic contaminants; pesticides and herbicides; organic chemical contaminants; and radioactive contaminants.