

Why isn't our water free?

Kentucky enjoys abundant water resources. According to government figures, Kentucky receives an average of 40-50 inches of rainfall annually and has almost 90,000 miles of rivers and streams. Knowing this information, you might ask, ***“Why isn't our drinking water free?”***

Water in its natural state can be unsafe for human consumption. It may contain naturally occurring bacteria, inorganic material and man-made contaminants such as pesticides and pollutants. As a result, your water utility has to treat the water before delivering it to your home. The process of turning nature's water into drinking water and delivering it to your tap can be a costly one.

For a better understanding of the costs associated with delivering safe water to your home, here is a look at the three main components to your water utility: **source, treatment and delivery.**



Source

The most vital component to your water utility is the source. Some utilities get their water supply from a surface water source such as a lake or river. Other utilities obtain water from groundwater sources, or aquifers, including underground rock, clay, sand and gravel materials that store this precious resource. Without proper caution, these water sources can be polluted.



Treatment

To make water safe for drinking, it must be treated. The water utility must filter and disinfect the water to remove impurities. Water treatment protects consumers from diseases like typhoid, hepatitis, and cholera, and removes harmful chemicals such as nitrates, which can cause severe health problems. For your safety, Kentucky water utilities are required by state and federal governments to perform numerous tests on the water and meet stringent treatment requirements before the water is made available for public consumption.

Delivery

Once the water has been taken from the source and treated, it is ready to be sent to your home through the distribution system, the third component of your water utility. After the water is treated, the treatment plant puts the water in storage tanks, where it is held until you are ready to use it. The water is delivered to your home through numerous pipes called water mains.

Many of these mains are very large and extend for miles. Valves are used to control the water so it can be shut off at important points. Water meters measure the volume of water you use at your home. Your water utility uses this reading to calculate your bill each month.



Public Service Commission

211 Sower Boulevard
P.O. Box 615
Frankfort, KY 40602
Phone: 800-772-4636
www.psc.state.ky.us

Water to every Kentuckian by 2020



Although most of us take water for granted, not all Kentucky citizens have access to safe drinking water in their homes. As many as 400,000 Kentucky citizens live in homes without a dependable source of safe drinking water.

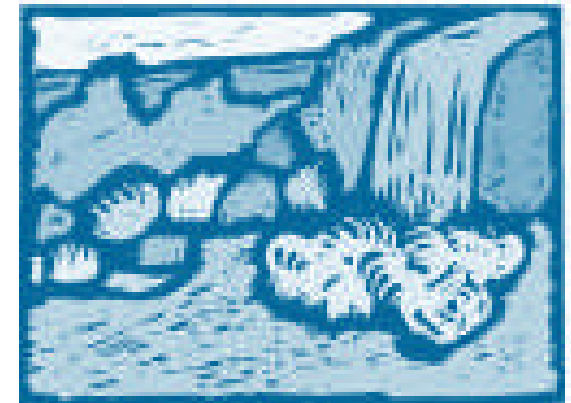
In 1998, Governor Paul Patton created the Water Resource Development Commission, which designed a plan to give every Kentucky home access to safe drinking water. This plan became law during the 2000 General Assembly.

Although water literally falls from the sky, it certainly is not free. We as customers must pay to cover the expense of pumping it from the source, the removal of contaminants that could threaten our health, and to maintain the system that brings water into our homes. Given the importance of water to life, water is a bargain.

See inside for more detail on the costs of providing safe drinking water.

KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

WATER: WHY ISN'T IT FREE?



**Utility Customer Hotline
1-800-772-4636**