As always, we are available to answer any questions you may have regarding your water quality. Just give us a call or drop us an e-mail. However, to save your time, we have compiled a list of our most frequently asked questions.

1. **What is the hardness of our water?**
   Answer: The hardness of our water is about 8 grains per gallon or 137 mg/l as CaCO3. It does not change significantly.

2. **Where does our water come from?**
   Answer: Our water comes from Lake Michigan, the largest freshwater lake in the United States and the fifth biggest lake in the world. Lake Michigan contains 1.2 quadrillion gallons of water.

3. **Why is our water so warm in the summer?**
   Answer: The summer sun heats Lake Michigan through out the summer months. Typically, July through September are the warm water months with our tap water reaching into the low 70 F range (21C). Winter brings about much cooler water temperatures, usually just above the freezing point. To enjoy an ice cold glass of water in the summer, collect a pitcher full and store it in the refrigerator.

4. **Why does my water sometimes smell or taste like a swimming pool?**
   Answer: Swimming pools, like all municipally treated tap water, are treated with chlorine. Although we add much less chlorine to our tap water than what is used in a pool, there are times when chlorine is apparent to some individuals.

We add chlorine to our water for a few reasons. First, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. EPA require that all water plants add chlorine to the water, no matter how
clean we get the water in the water plant. Second, we add chlorine to the water to protect it as it travels through water pipes and out of the faucet in your home. Be assured, we add the minimum amount of chlorine possible to our water to assure it is always safe to drink but also pleasing to drink.

5. Is our tap water safe?
Answer: Yes. Your water comes from a state-of-the-art water treatment facility that went into operation in 1992. Since the day operation began, no water quality standard of any kind has been exceeded. The water supplied to your Village meets every State and Federal regulation. If our water ever did exceed a standard you would be notified. Even if we detected any compound of concern in our water at any concentration, you would be notified at the very least on an annual basis in the Water Quality Report mailed directly to every person paying a water bill. If you are ever in doubt or desire to review our water quality records, please call us at 847-295-7788 to set up a time.

6. Should I buy bottled water?
Answer: In general, no. There are no health benefits to drinking bottled water compared to your tap water. Your water is tested for more kinds of bacteria and contaminants and is tested much more often than bottled water. Your tap water is held to higher standards than bottled water. Our doors and water quality records are always open for your critical review. Your treatment plant uses the same water treatment technology available to bottled water producers. And, our water is much less expensive. Bottled water does offer advantages to those who prefer the taste of a specific kind of water or to people on the go who don’t have time or forget to fill a sports bottle with tap water.

7. Do I still need my softener now that we receive Lake Michigan water?
Answer: Most residents that we have talked to decided to stop using their softeners. However, the answer to this question depends on why you purchased your softener in the first place. If you purchased it to keep your pipes from plugging up with scale, you no longer need it. Lake Michigan water does not typically clog water pipes. If you purchased it to reduce the amount of scale or lime that builds up on your faucet or around sinks and tubs, you will find this problem greatly diminished with Lake Michigan water, though it will cause a slight scale build up over time that requires cleaning. If you purchased your softener to remove iron from your water, you no longer need it. Lake Michigan contains almost no iron. If you purchased your softener because you want to use less detergent or soap, you will find that with Lake Michigan water, you will use much less detergent and soap than you did with your well water. If you are considering purchasing a water softener, please consider these things. A softener will remove the calcium and magnesium (hardness) from your tap water. These essential minerals will be
replaced with sodium (salt) in your tap water. While this does not improve the healthfulness of your tap water, it will cut down slightly on soap and detergent use. A softener does eliminate any scale from building up around your kitchen and bathroom fixtures but most people we have talked to however feel the amount of scale that does form around their faucets is so minimal, the expense of a softener is not worth it. Softeners do increase the corrosivity of water and are often implicated in increased lead and copper levels in homes with these plumbing materials. Finally, if you decide to purchase a softener, please invest the time to flush it out after being away for more than a few days. This reduces the number of nuisance bacteria that are present inside stagnant softener tanks.

8. Do I need a reverse osmosis "RO" unit?  
Answer: No. Properly and routinely maintained, NSF certified RO units are effective tools for removing some compounds from water. However, there are no compounds in the water CLCJAWA wholesales to each community that exceeds regulatory standards or requires further reduction beyond that done at the water treatment plant. RO units also lack disinfectant in their reservoir tanks, support nuisance bacterial growth in their carbon filters, and waste more water than they produce.

9. Do I need a water filter?  
Answer: No. The water you receive from your tap is safe to drink and has already been filtered through granular activated carbon and fine sand. The water produced by CLCJAWA is more than five times clearer than required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

If you are sensitive to chlorine in your water, a carbon filter will remove all chlorine. Carbon filters must be consistently maintained to minimize bacteriological contamination of your water. Most folks sensitive to the chlorine will fill a pitcher with tap water and place it in the refrigerator over night. Usually by the next day, the chlorine will have evaporated out of the water. If your immune system is compromised in any way, ask your doctor about any precautions you should take when drinking bottled or tap water.

10. Does our water contain fluoride?  
Answer: Yes. In Illinois, the Department of Public Health requires that we add fluoride to our water to provide children with one of the building blocks needed for strong teeth. At CLCJAWA, we only add what is required, no less and no more. Evanston was the first community to add fluoride to drinking water in 1947. Fluoride in drinking water is primarily absorbed into the bloodstream and deposited to the teeth of children up to the age of about 8.

11. What is the stuff in my hot water?
Answer: Water heaters can have a big impact on water quality. That is one reason why you should not drink hot tap water. As water heaters age, the components in the water heater tank and the tank itself breaks down. You may find white flakes in your faucet screens. These are usually present when the dip tube (a plastic pipe in your water heater) starts to flake apart. You may see a clear or green gel like substance if you draw a bath of hot water. This is caused from the anode rod, found in all water heaters, breaking down. And your hot water may smell odd. This too is caused by the chemical reaction between the anode rod and the water or by bacteria in the water heater. If any of these conditions are of concern, call a plumber to investigate the problem.

12. What is the pink stuff growing in and around my sink/tub/washer, etc.?
Answer: Pink, black, red, brown, orange, and salmon colored "stains" often appear in areas that are frequently wet. These "stains" are not from the water, but are caused by airborne mold, mildew, and bacteria. Collectively we call these things biological growths. Biological growth occurs despite frequent scrubbing and disinfection and is very frustrating. It may be very troublesome one year and disappear the next. It may reappear weeks after scrubbing or months later. It is typically worst during the summer time. The common factors that lead to these growths are moisture, nutrients, and the nature of the surface. Areas that are dry all the time do not support biological growth. Surfaces that are exposed to soap, food, body oils, or human wastes provide sufficient nutrients for biological growth - even if the surface looks clean. Surfaces that are porous like caulk, grout, plastic, paint, etc. retain moisture, resist cleaning, and provide nutrients for biological growth. The best way to minimize biological growth is to ventilate and dry wet areas as quickly as possible. The second best way is through frequent cleaning.

13. Why do we have watering restrictions?
Answer: It is true that 20% of the world's surface fresh water is contained in the Great Lakes. It may also seem impossible to imagine that humans could actually consume a measurable amount of water in our "fresh water ocean". But massive lakes, like the Aral Sea, the once mighty Colorado River, and underground aquifers have been all but emptied through human use. Fortunately, the United States and Canada have agreements to protect the Great Lakes for future generations while reducing our impact today. In an effort to reduce water loss from the Great Lakes Basin, citizens in the Great Lakes States and Provinces are mandated to practice water conservation. In Illinois, communities that use Lake Michigan water are mandated to restrict water use for irrigation as a conservation measure. Lake Michigan is immense, but only 1% of the water in the Lake is replaceable. The other 99% of the Lake's water has been deposited over more than 10,000 years. Like a bank account containing cash that we might inherit, once we spend the money it will take a long time to replenish the account. Those who proceeded us have left us with a large fresh water "account". Conservation will help us to leave
14. What is in our water?
Answer: Unlike many utilities and most water bottlers, CLCJAWA tests for hundreds more compounds than required. For a complete listing of compounds detected in our water click here. If you have a concern about a specific compound not on the list, please contact us.

15. Why is there a dark ring in my toilet bowl?
Answer: The water produced at CLCJAWA does not stain toilet bowls. The commonly observed ring in toilet bowls that occurs at the air-water interface is due to biological growth. The growth may not appear for years and then appear suddenly. When the toilet is used, human wastes are not completely removed and bacteria linger and flourish. These bacteria prefer a wet but not totally submerged environment. Above the water line there are few nutrients and too much air. Below the water line there are plenty of nutrients but less air. At the water line conditions are nearly ideal for biological growth. Newer toilets that consume less water may be contributing to inefficient waste removal from the bowl. The best approach to minimizing this nuisance is: 1. Make sure the toilet is flushed after each use. 2. Make sure the flush is complete and the toilet completely evacuates visible waste. 3. Increase cleaning frequency using appropriate toilet bowl cleanser.

16. I just saw a news story that implies our water is not safe, is it?
Answer: Various organizations will occasionally "reveal the truth" about the nation's drinking water. Many times, these organizations will create web sites that supposedly show the water quality in specific communities. Unfortunately, the information in these websites is often incorrect or misleading. In one recent case (12/2009) the organization gained national exposure on the evening news and in print. When visiting their site, the information presented about our water was incorrect. Interestingly, the site also contained a link to "donate now" and to water filter vendors. The best place to find out about your tap water is to call, email, or visit your water plant. At CLCJAWA, you may also find up-to-date water quality information on this web site where we disclose all test results. You may also refer to the Consumer Confidence Report published every spring by your community. This federally mandated report also discloses the presence of regulated compounds in your water. Finally, if you prefer a third-party water quality review, visit the Illinois EPA web site called Drinking Water Watch. Here you may review the water quality database for any water supply in Illinois including your Village and CLCJAWA.

17. I am getting a rash after showering or bathing, is my tap water the cause?
Answer: Rashes that occur after bathing or showering may be caused by an allergic reaction to soap, shampoo, bubble bath, or any other product. Showering and bathing may also dry out the
skin, especially in the dry winter months. Water, especially warm water, can remove natural oils from our skin and leave it feeling dried out leading to rashes in some individuals. The use of moisturizing skin lotion often brings relief to individuals suffering from dry skin. Concerns about dry skin and rashes require a diagnosis and are best addressed by your physician.

18. How is the microbiology of our water tested?
Answer: Our water is tested as it comes in to the treatment plant, after each treatment step, as the water leaves the water treatment plant, at the mid-point of our water distribution system and at the point of delivery to each community we serve. Additionally, each community monitors the water throughout their delivery system. Samples are analyzed in some locations every four hours and in others, every two weeks. Microbiological testing includes analysis for Total Coliform, E. coli and heterotrophic bacteria (also called standard plate count). We have also monitored the Lake Michigan water entering the treatment plant for Cryptosporidium and Giardia, neither of which have ever been detected in our source water.

19. Why is the water appear blue/green when I fill my white tub?
Answer: The water produced at CLCJAWA is colorless. A bluish or greenish tint in your bathtub water is typically due to the lighting used in your bathroom. When light shines on water, the water absorbs some colors and reflects others. The deeper the water, the more apparent the color. Different types of light bulbs can make the water appear different colors because each bulb produces different types of light. A less likely cause of blue colored water is corrosion of the copper plumbing in your home. Copper plumbing can corrode if stray current from your home’s electrical system passes through it. Historically, plumbing systems were used to ground a home’s electrical system. In this scenario the blue or green color may be accompanied by blue-green particles in the water or in the ice cubes produced by an ice maker. Finally, blue or green colored water could be caused by the corrosion of the anode rod in your home’s water heater. Often times this anode rod is composed of aluminum that slowly dissolves, sometimes forming a green gelatinous material. This may be especially apparent when draining the water heater.

20. Does my water contain lead?
Answer: The water that CLCJAWA delivers to each community contains no detectable lead. Lead in tap water typically comes from the service pipe that enters a building or the plumbing within the building. Newer homes typically do not have lead service pipes or lead containing plumbing. Because homeowners, typically own the service pipe leading into their building and the plumbing within it, they should consult with a licensed plumber and/or consult with their public works department if they are concerned. The US EPA also offers guidance to reduce
lead in your water here. You may also wish to have your water tested for lead by a lab like the Lake County Health Department Environmental Lab (847-377-8017).

CLCJAWA does add a drinking water certified corrosion inhibitor called orthophosphate, to the water. This common drinking water and food ingredient binds with metals like lead, to keep them from corroding and getting into your water from your plumbing. This compound reduces lead in many homes but does not remove it completely from all homes or to levels considered safe in some homes. Because your community is responsible for lead compliance, contact them for more information, click here to review water results for your community, or refer to your annual Consumer Confidence Water Report.

21. Why is my water milky looking?
Answer: When a glass of water appears milky, let it sit and observe the cloudiness. If the cloudiness rises to the top, the milkiness is composed of air bubbles. Air bubbles in water do not make the water unsafe. They can be removed by flushing the taps in your home. There are a few possible sources of air in water including air entrapped in repaired pipes, malfunctioning water pumps or more commonly, water temperature changes. As wintertime cools Lake Michigan, more air dissolves in the water. After the water is treated it is pumped into pipes that are under pressure. This pressure holds the air in the water, even as the water warms a few degrees on its way to your home. Once the pressure is released at your tap, the air quickly comes out of the water making it appear milky and rising to the top of the glass. This action can also drive some of the chlorine from water, making it seem like the water contains more chlorine than normal. Water from the water heater is most prone to milkiness. Milky water typically occurs in the winter month and is usually a temporary event that occurs erratically. Call your public works department if the cloudiness persists in your taps or settles to the bottom of a glass of water.