ClearQuest Index Finds Tampa Bay Water Runs 9 to 18 Grains Per Gallon

Lutz company publishes free hardness index after finding county water measured as hard as well water, filling a gap utilities are not required to report.



Tampa water test readings

LUTZ, FL, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- LUTZ, Fla. — ClearQuest Water Solutions, a family-owned water treatment company based in Lutz, Florida, has published a free public index of residential water hardness across the Tampa Bay region and Hernando County, reporting measured readings between 9 and 18 grains per gallon, or roughly 154 to 308 parts per million.

Every area the company measured fell into the hard or very hard category. None measured soft or moderately hard.

> Everybody walks in thinking the wells are the problem. On hardness, that's not what we see. County water measured as hard as the wells here, and at the top end it measured harder."
>
> *Zach Brownell, Founder, ClearQuest Water Solutions*

The company compiled the index because the figure is not otherwise published. Water hardness, which measures the dissolved calcium and magnesium that cause limescale, spotted glassware and soap that will not lather, is classified under drinking water rules as an aesthetic characteristic rather than a health-based one. Utilities are not required to report it in the annual Consumer Confidence Reports that cover regulated contaminants.

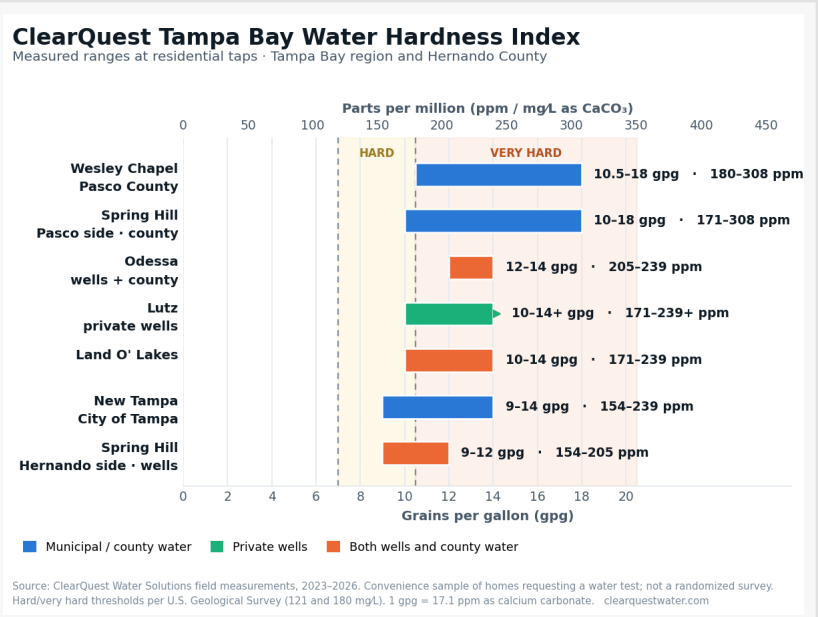
A review of Pasco County Utilities' 2025 water quality reports confirms the gap. The reports list regulated contaminants and sodium, but contain no hardness figure. The City of Tampa is a rare exception among regional utilities, publishing a range of 140 to 300 parts per million, or roughly 8 to 17 grains per gallon, which shifts between wet and dry

seasons.

"If you search for how hard the water is in Wesley Chapel, you get five different answers from five websites, and not one of them measured anything," said Zach Brownell, who founded ClearQuest Water Solutions with his wife Abby in 2023. "We have been carrying a test kit into houses for three years. We already had the answer."

The ClearQuest Tampa Bay Water Hardness Index reports observed ranges by area and water source:

Wesley Chapel, on Pasco County water: 10.5 to 18 grains per gallon, or 180 to 308 parts per million
Spring Hill, Pasco County side: 10 to 18 grains per gallon, or 171 to 308 parts per million
Odessa, wells and Pasco County water: 12 to 14 grains per gallon, or 205 to 239 parts per million
Lutz, private wells: 10 to 14 grains per gallon, or 171 to 239 parts per million, higher in some homes
Land O' Lakes: 10 to 14 grains per gallon, or 171 to 239 parts per million
New Tampa, on City of Tampa water: 9 to 14 grains per gallon, or 154 to 239 parts per million
Spring Hill, Hernando County side and wells: 9 to 12 grains per gallon, or 154 to 205 parts per million



Water Hardness readings in the Greater Tampa Bay area


Zach testing a customers kitchen sink tap

Readings are reported in both units because utilities publish hardness in parts per million while softener equipment is specified in grains per gallon. One grain per gallon equals approximately 17.1 parts per million as calcium carbonate.

Under the classification used by the U.S. Geological Survey, water above 121 parts per million, or roughly 7 grains per gallon, is classified as hard, and water above 180 parts per million, or 10.5

grains per gallon, is very hard. Most readings in the index fall in the very hard range.

The most surprising result, according to Brownell, involves a common assumption about well water.

"Everybody walks in thinking the wells are the problem," he said. "On hardness specifically, that is not what we see. County water measured as hard as the wells around here, and at the top end it measured harder. A house on municipal water in Wesley Chapel can be dealing with more hardness than a neighbor on a well."

The company's New Tampa readings of 154 to 239 parts per million fall inside the 140 to 300 range the City of Tampa publishes for its own system, an independent check against the one regional utility that reports the figure.

ClearQuest is direct about the limits of the data. Readings were taken at kitchen taps inside homes that contacted the company for a water test, gathered over the course of more than 260 installations and additional free tests. It is a convenience sample rather than a randomized survey, and it reflects the homes that called rather than a statistical cross-section of any city.

"This is not a scientific study and we are not going to dress it up as one," Brownell said. "It is real readings from real kitchen sinks, which is more than anyone else has published. If a utility releases better numbers tomorrow, use theirs."

The index arrives as ClearQuest expands into Hernando County, including Spring Hill and Weeki Wachee, where thousands of new homes are under construction. Homes across the region draw from the Floridan aquifer, the limestone-filtered groundwater supplying most of west-central Florida, which produces naturally hard water regardless of a home's age.

"A brand-new house does not get brand-new water," Zach said. "Builders here know it. That is why so many new homes already have a softener loop sitting in the garage."

The company offers water softener installation, city water treatment pairing carbon filtration with softening, iron and sulfur removal for wells, and reverse osmosis drinking water systems. Every job begins with a free water test, and the company does not use color-change demonstrations or high-pressure in-home sales tactics.

ClearQuest serves Lutz, Wesley Chapel, Land O' Lakes, New Tampa, Tampa, Odessa, Trinity, Zephyrhills, New Port Richey, Brandon, Dade City, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Spring Hill, Weeki Wachee and Brooksville. Homeowners can request a free water test by calling (813) 729-2125.

About ClearQuest Water Solutions

ClearQuest Water Solutions is a family-owned, licensed and insured water treatment company

based in Lutz, Florida, serving homeowners across the Tampa Bay region and Hernando County. Founded in 2023 by Zach and Abby Brownell, the company specializes in whole-home water filtration, water softener installation, city water treatment, reverse osmosis drinking water systems and residential water quality testing. It has completed more than 260 installations and holds a 5.0-star rating on Google.

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