

The water supply

It is a great challenge to establish and maintain infrastructure in Greenland. The large distances between settlements scattered over a coastline similar to the coastline of Western Europe from north to south make it impossible to provide supply between the individual settlements. This kind of operation is called the "island operation". This means that all production of electricity, water and heat takes place from local plants.

The establishment of the public water supply was launched in 1950. Today, all settlements have a functioning water supply system. The water supply to the households is connected to the main water supply plant. This applies to the majority of the households. However, there are still houses in the settlement that have water tank, and tanker trucks are still transporting water to these homes, while other households in the small settlements even fetch water in a building containing a central water installation.

The majority of the water is surface water from lakes, while a small part of the water comes from springs. There are also settlements where the water is produced from the melted ice. In Greenland there are nine osmosis installations, where a reverse osmosis makes drinking water out

of seawater.

The water is treated chemically and physically. This means that the water, which runs out of the tap, is free of bacteria and contaminants. The content of the various chemicals in drinking water is primarily dependent on the mountain, as the water runs and are collected in. There is a knock-on effect - a kind of "fingerprint" - from the rocks of the catchment area of the water resource. The chemical composition of the water can also be influenced by local pollution in the form of, for example dog excrement, from birds etc.

In Nuuk the water is transported into the centre of the town from a lake outside the town. The transportation takes place in the water pipes that run through a tunnel in the mountain Quassussuaq, and underground along the roads. But the water pipes are often located on top of the surface. Here, the water pipes are fitted with insulation and heating. Close to the centre of the town the water is stored in a large open water reservoir.

There are no bacteria in the water in Nuuk. The water may be used directly from the tap, without having first to be cooked.



*The water pipe to the centre of
Nuuk, September 2007*