Town of Scituate

Department of Public Works

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) MCL Violation at Scituate Water Division

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results from 8/5/2020 show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for TTHM. The standard for TTHM is 80 parts per billion (ppb). It is determined by averaging all samples collected at each sampling location for the past 12 months. The level of TTHM averaged at one of our system's location for 11/7/2019 – 8/5/2020 was 88.

What are Trihalomethanes?
Chlorination of drinking water throughout the world has been recognized as one of the most effective public health measures undertaken in modern times. Where water is effectively chlorinated infection by waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery has ceased to pose a risk to public health. However, chlorination of drinking water may produce by-products such as a group of chemicals known as trihalomethanes (THMs). THMs may be formed when chlorine reacts with natural organic matter that can be found in some water sources. Examples of organic matter are plant life (both at the surface and below) and algae.

What should I do?

- There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?
This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours.
TTHM are four volatile organic chemicals, which form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water.
People who drink water-containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.
Please see https://www.mass.gov/service-details/tthm-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers for a fact sheet on TTHMs.

What is being done?
We are working to minimize the formation of TTHM's while ensuring we maintain an adequate level of disinfectant. We have taken additional steps to change disinfectant levels, remove natural organic matter, and have increased flushing of water lines to determine if our efforts have been effective.

For more information, please contact Sean Anderson at 781-545-8735 or sanderson@scituatema.gov

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

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