



City of Newport
Department of Public Works

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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As required by State and Federal Regulations the Newport Water Division will be mailing a notice to all customers of the Newport Water System that a drinking water standard was recently violated.

The Newport Water Division is a Public Water System and routinely tests at various sites within the distribution system for Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs). EPA sets standards for controlling the levels of disinfectants and DBPs in drinking water, including total trihalomethanes (TTHMs). The average results of tests taken during the last four quarters show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for TTHMs. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for TTHMs is 80 parts per billion (ppb) for a four quarter running average. Newport Water Division's average level of TTHMs for the last four quarters (April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009) is 86.58 ppb. The TTHM level for the first quarter of 2009 is reported as 48.80 ppb, however when calculating the four quarter average in accordance with the regulations for compliance the MCL for TTHMs is exceeded.

This is not an emergency and our customers **do not need to boil water or take other action**. The EPA has established public notification rules and tiers under which specific violations are assigned. The TTHM violation is a Tier 2 violation of the drinking water regulations. Tier 2 violations are considered less urgent than Tier 1 violations because there is little immediate risk to consumers. Tier 2 violations require a public notification delivered to customers within 30 days after a violation is discovered.

The Newport Water Division has taken the following steps to lower TTHMs in your drinking water:

1. Continue to adjust and optimize chlorine levels to provide adequate disinfection while reducing the potential to form TTHMs. There is a fine balance which must be maintained in drinking water to provide appropriate disinfection while not chlorinating too heavily, which tends to form TTHMs.
2. Installed a mixing system in the Reservoir Rd Storage tank. The mixing system reduces the average age of the water in the distribution system. Older age of the water can produce higher TTHM levels.

3. Upgraded the Lawton Valley Sedimentation Basin #1. The sedimentation basins are the first part of the plant treatment which removes organics from the raw water supply. High organic levels can lead to high TTHM levels.
4. Installed an aeration system in the Lawton Valley Reservoir. The aeration system has the potential to reduce algae blooms in the raw water reservoirs. Algae blooms tend to lead to higher organic levels in the treated water.
5. The Newport Water Division has retained an engineering firm to assist with implementing a change in the treatment process to reduce the formation of DBPs. In order to not compromise compliance with other drinking water regulations, this treatment change has taken time to implement. The Newport Water Division is working closely with the RIDOH to implement the treatment change. Required testing of the treatment began in November, 2007 to monitor the effects of the treatment change on other drinking water standards, most importantly the standard for Lead levels.

The Newport Water Division has also committed to constructing a new water treatment plant to replace the existing Lawton Valley Plant, and to upgrade the existing Station 1 Plant by December 31, 2014. The Water Division has retained CDM, Inc as City Advisor to provide professional services for the procurement, design, and construction of the major capital improvements for the Water Treatment Plants.

In accordance with the regulations of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the RI Department of Health has been consulted regarding the notification being mailed to Newport Water consumers. Attached is a copy of the public notification that is being issued to our water customers.