



City of Newport
Department of Utilities

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 (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009) is 81.34 ppb.

As with many water systems, Newport Water Division disinfects the water with chlorine in order to inactivate pathogens that cause disease. Water systems are also required to maintain a residual level of chlorine throughout the distribution system. While chlorine is effective in controlling harmful microorganisms, it does react with organic and inorganic matter in the water to form disinfectant by products. One of the by products are the Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) which can pose health risks when exposed to certain levels over a period of time. The challenge Newport Water Division faces is trying to reduce the organics levels in our raw water reservoirs which tend to have high levels due to being shallow and located in developed watersheds. The existing treatment processes at the plants are at their limits of providing removal of organics and maintaining compliance with all the drinking water standards. The Newport Water Division attributes part of the cause for the high TTHM levels to the heavy rains in the late summer of 2008 and the recent rains in 2009 which contribute high runoff of organics into the reservoirs.

This violation is a continuance of the violation that occurred during the fourth quarter of 2008. The 4 quarter running average for the third quarter of 2009 is calculated by averaging the levels detected from the last four quarters to arrive at 81.34 ppb:

4th quarter 2008 (Oct-Dec 2008) 125.79
1st quarter 2009 (Jan- Mar 2009) 48.80 ppb
2nd quarter 2009 (Apr- June 2009) 46.50 ppb
3rd quarter 2009 (July-Sept 2009) 104.29 ppb

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 in effort to lower TTHMs in your drinking water:

1. Continue to adjust and optimize chlorine and chlorine dioxide 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 mixing systems in the Reservoir Rd and Goulart Lane storage tanks. 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. Alter the strategy to treat the reservoirs with copper sulfate for algae blooms by being more aggressive in treating prior to onset of an active bloom. Algae growth in the reservoirs plays a significant role in the formation of high organic levels in the water that enters the treatment plants.
6. The Newport Water Division continues to conduct testing to determine if our disinfection process can be change to the use of chloramines which will stop the formation of TTHMs. However we need to be certain not to compromise compliance with other drinking water regulations 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. Full scale pilot testing of treatment options began in April, 2009.

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.