

# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

### **The Newport Water Division Has Levels of Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) Above Drinking Water Standards**

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

The Newport Water Division is a Public Water System and routinely tests at various sites within the distribution system for disinfectant by products (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 an annual 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

#### **WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

There are no actions that you need to take at this time. You do not need to use an alternate (i.e., bottled) water supply. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective action. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

#### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

This is not an emergency or immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately.

Many water systems treat water with a chemical disinfectant, such as chlorine, in order to inactivate pathogens that cause disease. While disinfectants are effective in controlling many harmful microorganisms, they react with organic and inorganic matter in the water to form DBPs, some of which pose health risks at certain levels. Some 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. The public health benefits of chlorine disinfection practices are significant and well recognized. Consequently, one of the most complex questions facing water supply professionals is how to reduce risks from disinfectants and DBPs while providing increased protection against microbial contaminants.

#### **WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS BEING DONE?**

TTHMs form with time when the natural organics in water react with chlorine as it breaks down. The unusual wet weather this past summer has also resulted in elevated levels of organics in the raw water which resulted in high TTHM averages for two quarters. The TTHM levels in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for 2009 are below the MCL, however when calculating the four quarter average the MCL is exceeded. Newport Water has taken the following steps to lower TTHMs in your drinking water: (1) continue to adjust and optimize chlorine addition to provide adequate disinfection while reducing the potential to form TTHMs; (2) installed a mixing system in the Reservoir Rd Storage tank; (3) upgraded the Lawton Valley Sedimentation Basin #1; and (4) installed an aeration system in the Lawton Valley Reservoir.

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. 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.

#### **HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEM?**

For more information, please contact Julia Fogue, P.E., Director of Public Works or Ken Mason, P.E., Deputy Utilities Director-Engineering at (401) 845-5600 or in writing to, Newport Water Division, 70 Halsey St., Newport, RI 02840. For general information on TTHMs, you may also call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800)-426-4791 or visit the EPA web site at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater>

**This public notice is being sent to you by the  
City of Newport, Newport Water Division  
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*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.*