

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Peekskill's Water System Has Levels of Total Trihalomethanes and Haloacetic Acids Above Drinking Water Standards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set higher standards in drinking water. Our water quality has not changed, but the regulation has. As a result, our water system is not in compliance with the new drinking water standards. This is not an emergency, but as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what, if anything, you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results we received on January 15, 2009 show that our system exceeds the new standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for Total Trihalomethanes (THM) and Haloacetic Acids (HAA5 – mono, di-bromoacetic acid; mono, di, tri-chloroacetic acid).

The standard for THMs is < 80 ug/l. The average level of THMs over the last year was 95 ug/l. The standard for HAA5 is <60 ug/l. The average level of HAA5 over the last year was 71 ug/l.

Is the water safe for the general public to drink? What should I do?

Yes, the water is safe for the general population to drink. You do not need to use an alternative water supply (e.g., bottled). However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your physician for recommendations.

What does this mean?

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. The trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids are “disinfection by-products” that are formed when natural organic material, such as decaying vegetation found in lakes and reservoirs, reacts with chlorine used to treat the water. Trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids have been classified by the EPA as possible carcinogens. Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

Why do we use chlorine if it creates these by-products?

Chlorine is needed to kill harmful organisms. It has been used for nearly a century due to its effectiveness at killing bacteria and viruses in water. There is no question that its use has been a huge public health benefit in reducing and even eliminating certain serious health problems caused by waterborne germs.

What happened?

Our water quality did not change, but the regulations did. In recent years, the Environmental Protection Agency has taken greater steps to regulate drinking water thereby setting a higher standard. While these regulations will help to ensure *safe drinking water well into the future*, it also means that we will need to make improvements to our treatment facilities to meet these standards. Until we can meet these new regulations you will receive this notice every 90 days.

What is being done?

Engineering studies began in 2000 to see what we needed to do in order to continue to meet federal and state drinking water regulations. As a result of the study, construction of a new state of the art water treatment facility began on November 21, 2006. This project, the largest capital improvement in the City, will enable us to not only meet but exceed mandated drinking water regulations well into the future. The anticipated completion of this project is the spring of 2009.

For more information, please contact the Water Superintendent at (914) 734-4150 or 840 Main Street, Peekskill, NY 10566. More information regarding contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000 or the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791.

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.