

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

To all customers of the Bellingham DPW Water and Sewer Division located in Bellingham, Massachusetts
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) are Above Drinking Water Standards

This is an important notice - please translate it for anyone who does not understand English.

This notice is to advise our customers that our water system is in noncompliance with the drinking water standards for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs). 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 this situation.

We are required to monitor the drinking water for TTHM levels on a quarterly basis (once every three months) at four specific locations in the distribution system. **The results of last quarter's samples show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL) for TTHMs at one out of four locations during the July through September 2021 compliance period.** The standard for TTHMs is 80 parts per billion (ppb), and compliance is determined on a quarterly basis by averaging all samples collected at each location for the last 12 months (Running Annual Average). The locations and those averages are as follows (averages above the MCL have been highlighted):

Location	July-Sept 2021 TTHM Running Annual Average (ppb)
DBP1 – 79 Hartford Ave.	85
DBP2 – 20 Cranberry Meadow	50
DBP4 – 342 Hartford Ave.	67
DBP5 – 115 North Main St.	71

What does this mean?

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified right away. However, pregnant women, infants, and women of childbearing age may be at increased risk and should seek advice from their health care providers if they have any concerns. ***Some people who drink water containing (TTHMs) 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.***

What happened?

TTHMs are a byproduct of chlorine disinfection which forms when chlorine combines with natural organic matter commonly found in surface water supplies and sometimes in groundwater sources. TTHM levels can vary depending on a number of factors including the amount of chlorine used, amount of organic plant material in water sources, temperature, and seasons. We must control TTHM levels while also maintaining appropriate levels of disinfectant in the water necessary to avoid bacterial issues.

What is being done?

We are working closely with MassDEP and have made some significant changes to help us resolve this non-compliance issue.

- We have collected numerous additional water samples for analysis to gain a better knowledge base regarding the organics in our raw water and TTHM precursor levels throughout our system and filtration processes.
- Significant changes to treatment processes have been made based upon changes in water characteristics.
- We have conducted major flushing of storage tanks and water mains to replace stagnant water throughout the system.
- A feasibility study is about to begin that will look at the best means to enhance our water treatment plant's ability to remove TTHM and other Disinfectant Byproducts.

What can you do to reduce exposure?

- Some activated carbon type filters can help remove or lower chlorine and TTHM levels. For more information on filters please refer to US EPA Filtration Facts at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-11/documents/2005_11_17_faq_fs_healthseries_filtration.pdf
- Use bottled water for drinking.

Where to find more information?

- A question-and-answer document on health effects, precautions, and water treatment options for TTHMs is available on the MassDEP website. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/tthm-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers>
- You can also contact the US EPA Safe Drinking Water Hot Line at #1-800-426-4791.

Additional Information

- Due to the Running Annual Average (RAA) requirements of this regulation we may continue to be in non-compliance until the results are calculated below the 80 ppb MCL.
- A notice similar to this will be issued each quarter until we return to compliance.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://bellingham.org> or contact Don DiMartino, DPW Director, at 508-966-5816.

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.