

NOTICE OF HIGH TRIHALOMETHANE LEVELS
Athens Village Water System - September 2018

From the 4th quarter of 2017 through the 3rd quarter 2018 (10/1/17 – 7/31/18) the Athens Village Water System was found to have an average concentration of total trihalomethanes that exceed the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 80 parts per billion (ppb). Compliance with the MCL is based on the average of the four most recent quarterly sample results collected from each sampling location. The current THM LRAA is 87 ppb. Water suppliers are required to provide written public notification to consumers when the MCL is exceeded.

What are trihalomethanes?

Trihalomethanes are a group of chemicals that are formed in drinking water during disinfection when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic material (e.g., decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. They are disinfection byproducts and include the individual chemicals chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and chlorodibromomethane. The amount of trihalomethanes formed in drinking water during disinfection can change from day to day, depending on the temperature, the amount of organic material in the water, the amount of chlorine added, and a variety of other factors.

Disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health. Drinking water is disinfected by public water suppliers to kill bacteria and viruses that could cause serious illness, and chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State. All public water systems that use chlorine as a disinfectant contain trihalomethanes to some degree.

What are the health effects of trihalomethanes?

Some studies suggest that people who drank water containing trihalomethanes for long periods of time (e.g., 20 to 30 years) have an increased risk of certain health effects. These include risk of cancer and for low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. **The methods used by these studies could not rule out the role of other factors that could have resulted in the observed increased risks. In addition, other similar studies do not show an increased risk of health effects. Therefore, the evidence from these studies is not strong enough to conclude that trihalomethanes were a major factor contributing to the increased risks for these health effects.** Studies of laboratory animals show that some trihalomethanes can cause cancer and adverse reproductive and developmental effects, but at exposures much higher than exposures that could result through normal use of the water. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the information from the human and animal studies and concluded that while there is no causal link between disinfection byproducts (including trihalomethanes) and human health effects, the balance of the information warranted stronger regulations that limit the amount of trihalomethanes in drinking water, while still allowing for adequate disinfection. **The risks for adverse health effects from trihalomethanes in drinking water are small compared to the risks for illness from drinking inadequately disinfected water.**

What are we doing to address this situation?

Please know that the Village Board and the Water Treatment Facility Staff take very seriously this situation, and our goal is to provide you with safest drinking water possible. In light of this violation we have taken steps to work towards alleviating this problem. These steps include the installation of new sampling taps both at the Water Treatment Plant and out in the distribution system. These new monitoring points will allow us to better monitor the Chlorine used to disinfect the water and make adjustments based on the data collected from these new monitoring points. We are also working on setting up an in house laboratory monitoring plan that will allow us to make adjustments to the coagulation chemicals used to remove the organic material from the water before it reaches the disinfection system, thus reducing the reaction that creates the disinfection byproduct chemicals discussed earlier in this notification.

If you have questions on any of the above, please contact Seth Mann at (518) 945-1805 or the EPS's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791