



Important Information About Your Drinking Water

Dear City of Boulder Utilities Customer:

The City of Boulder water system recently exceeded the drinking water standard for haloacetic acids. This was not an emergency and does not require using an alternate water source, but as a city customer, you have a right to know what happened and how city staff has corrected the situation. This notification complies with federal and state laws requiring water systems to notify customers when a drinking water standard is exceeded. All other drinking water standards were met during this period.

What Happened

City staff routinely monitors for haloacetic acids, a byproduct of drinking water disinfection. On July 7, 2017, city staff received confirmation from monitoring results that the city exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water standard for haloacetic acids of 60 micrograms/liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) as a running annual average (this standard is called the maximum contaminant level, or MCL). The annual average level of haloacetic acids at one of eight sampling sites across the city was 60.8 $\mu\text{g/L}$, 0.8 $\mu\text{g/L}$ above the MCL. Running annual average haloacetic levels in the city distribution system typically range from 23 to 48 $\mu\text{g/L}$.

Why This Happened

The city disinfects drinking water with chlorine to control organisms that can result in water-borne illnesses. The construction at the Betasso Treatment Plant prompted an adjustment to the city's water treatment process, including applying disinfectants earlier in the treatment process, prior to filtering out organic matter. While this method is effective for disinfection, it can also result in more byproducts, such as haloacetic acids, when there is a high level of organic material in the water. In late May and early June, during spring snowmelt runoff, the chlorine in the water combined with a higher level of organic matter from the runoff resulted in higher than usual levels of haloacetic acids.

Corrective Actions

City staff first became aware of the higher levels of haloacetic acids the first week of June after reviewing monthly monitoring results. The city is required to monitor water quality on a quarterly basis but monitors on a monthly basis to more readily see water quality changes. City staff then lowered the levels of chlorine in the disinfection process, which lowered the level of the byproduct. City staff estimate that higher than usual levels of haloacetic acids were present for less than 30 days. To ensure this situation does not happen again, additional training has been provided and additional warning systems that alert operators when there is a potential for high levels of disinfectant byproducts have been implemented.

What This Means for Customers

- **You do not need to take any action** related to your drinking water or seek an alternate supply of drinking water. If this had been an emergency, you would have been notified immediately.
- **Health effects.** Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. The level of haloacetic acids exceeded the MCL for less than 30 days. Customers who wish to learn more about the potential health effects of exposure may visit www.cdc.gov/safewater/chlorination-byproducts.html for additional information or consult with their doctor if they have specific health concerns.
- **Who is affected.** While only one of the city's eight sampling sites indicated an exceedance of the byproduct, it is possible that levels exceeded the MCL throughout the city's distribution system. Therefore, city staff have advised that all customers may have consumed water with elevated levels of haloacetic acids during this time period.

For more information, please contact Tom Settle at 303-441-3200, settlet@bouldercolorado.gov or 1094 Betasso Road, Boulder, CO 80302. You may also visit www.bouldercolorado.gov/water/drinking-water-quality to learn more about water quality monitoring in the city and to view the 2017 Drinking Water Quality Report.

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 public notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

Residents who do not receive water from the City of Boulder can disregard this notification.