

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

North Attleboro Water Department Failed to Perform Activities Required to Address Coliform Bacteria Contamination of the Water System

During routine monitoring in July 2023, our water system tested positive for total coliforms. However, the laboratory did NOT notify us of the total coliform positive (E. coli absent) finished water/after treatment sample at our Hillman Treatment Plant upon completion of the analysis. As we were NOT aware of the total coliform positive sample, we did not collect the required repeat samples, which is a Treatment Technique Trigger (TTT). We were required to conduct a Level 1 Assessment by August 3, 2023, but failed to do so, due to the lack of notification of the detect by the lab. Failure to submit the assessment by the due date constitutes a Treatment Technique Violation.

Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, waterborne pathogens may be present or that a potential pathway exists through which contamination may enter the drinking water distribution system. We found coliforms indicating the need to look for potential problems in water treatment or distribution.

When this occurs, we are required to conduct assessments to identify problems and to correct any problems that are found. We failed to conduct the required assessment by August 3, 2023. In addition, we failed to notify MassDEP of the Treatment Technique Trigger and the Treatment Technique Violation within the required timeframes.

As our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

What should I do?

- You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your healthcare provider about drinking this water. You should also seek advice from your healthcare provider about using the water if you have an infant. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by bacteria and other disease-causing organisms are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

What does this mean?

Since total coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves, this is not an emergency. If it had been you would have been notified within 24 hours. Failure to identify and correct the defects has the potential to cause continued distribution system contamination. Inadequately treated or inadequately protected water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.

What is being done?

We completed the required assessment and submitted it to MassDEP on September 2, 2023, along with supporting documentation from the laboratory acknowledging the lab error, including a copy of a letter to MassDEP regarding corrective actions implemented by the laboratory to ensure that this issue does not reoccur. We have returned to compliance with the Revised Total Coliform Rule. No sanitary defects were found during the assessment. No corrective actions were required by the PWS.

Where can I get additional information?

If you have questions about your water system's operation, water quality monitoring, or response to this issue, please contact the system operator directly. If you have questions about the drinking water regulations or health risks posed by this contaminant you can contact the MassDEP Drinking Water Program at: program.director-dwp@mass.gov or 617-292-5770. If you have questions about specific symptoms, you can contact your doctor or other health care provider. If you have general questions about public health, you can contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1-617-624-5757.

For more information, please contact William Wanberg, 508-695-7790 or 49 Whiting Street, N. Attleborough, MA.

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.

This notice is being sent to you by North Attleboro Water Dept., State Water System ID#: 4211000.

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