

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Haloacetic Acid 5 (HAA₅) MCL Violation at Housatonic Water Works Company

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we have done to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results from the 3rd Quarter and 4th Quarter of 2021 show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for HAA₅. The standard for HAA₅ is 60 parts per billion (ppb). Compliance is determined by averaging all samples collected at each sampling location for the past 12 months (the Locational Running Annual Average). The level of HAA₅ averaged at our system's monitoring location for October 2020 through September 2021 was 65 ppb, and for January through December 2021 it averaged 73 ppb. During the October 2020 to now the range of HAA₅ was 44 ppb to 103 ppb.

What should I do?

- There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours.

HAA₅ are five haloacetic acid compounds which form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water. *People who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.* [Please see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/haa5-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers> for a fact sheet on HAA₅.]

What is being done?

The amount of disinfectant used impacts the formation of HAA₅, and there is a balance required between using chlorine to control pathogenic microorganisms and the undesirable byproducts of the chlorination process such as HAA₅. In 2021, the chlorine residual levels used by the water company were somewhat elevated compared to previously. In response to the HAA₅ levels observed, we have since reduced the chlorine dosing while maintaining more than enough chlorine residual to meet and exceed all disinfection requirements. We expect this adjustment will satisfactorily reduce the HAA₅ levels, however we will complete the required engineering report to more fully evaluate our system and opportunities to address the formation of HAA₅.

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.

For more information, please contact the water company at 413-528-1780, housatonicwater@gmail.com, or write to us at 80 Maple Ave, Suite 1, Great Barrington, MA 01230. This notice is being sent to you by the Housatonic Water Works Company. PWS ID #1113003.

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