

Town of Hanover



PUBLIC NOTICE - IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) MCL Violation at Hanover Water Department

In the past 30 years, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) has been highly effective in protecting public health and has also evolved to respond to new and emerging threats to safe drinking water. Disinfection of drinking water is one of the major public health advances in the 20th century. One hundred years ago, typhoid and cholera epidemics were common through American cities; disinfection was a major factor in reducing these epidemics.

However, the disinfectants themselves can react with naturally-occurring materials in the water to form byproducts, which may pose health risks. One of these byproducts is total trihalomethanes (TTHMs). In June of 2015, the Hanover Water Department exceeded the drinking water standard for TTHMs as established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). That standard is set at 80 parts per billion (ppb). The sample tested in June of 2015 had a TTHM level of 84.3 ppb. As a result, the Town of Hanover has issued a public notice regarding this violation of the EPA standard for TTHMs in our drinking water. Some people who drink water containing TTHMs in excess of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) over many years could experience liver, kidney, or central nervous system problems and increased risk of cancer.

Amendments to the SDWA in 1996 required the EPA to develop rules to balance the risks between microbial pathogens and disinfection byproducts (DBPs). These rules will reduce potential cancer and reproductive and developmental health risks from disinfection byproducts (DBPs) in drinking water. Over 260 million individuals within the United States are exposed to DBPs. The EPA has projected that current SDWA regulations will prevent approximately 280 bladder cancer cases per year. To protect public health, EPA continues to strongly support both the disinfection of drinking water to reduce the risk of waterborne disease and the reduction of disinfection byproducts. EPA has regulated DBPs since 1979 to address health risks posed by a potential association between chlorinated drinking water and cancer, particularly bladder cancer. Current reproductive and developmental health effects data do not support a conclusion at this time as to whether exposure to chlorinated drinking water or disinfection byproducts causes adverse developmental or reproductive health effects, but do support a potential health concern.

The most important thing to know is that this situation is not a public health emergency. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) have advised us that there is not a need for our residents to use an alternate water supply. However, if you have specific health concerns, you should consult your doctor. The Hanover Health Department has notified health care providers in the community about this issue so they can be prepared to answer any questions you may have.

Please read the DEP Public Notice on the reverse side of this flyer.

Town of Hanover
Dept. of Public Works
40 Pond Street
Hanover, MA 02339

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) MCL Violation at Hanover Water Department

The Town of Hanover's water system recently violated an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, you have a right to know what has happened, what you should do and what the Town is doing to correct the situation.

Hanover's drinking water is disinfected with chlorine. In addition to testing for any bacteria in the distribution system, the water is also routinely tested quarterly at four (4) sites in the distribution system for the presence of byproducts related to the disinfection process. The EPA sets standards for the maximum levels of both disinfectants and disinfection byproducts (DBP's) in drinking water. This includes substances known as trihalomethanes, collectively called total trihalomethanes or TTHMs. The EPA standard for TTHMs is 80 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) which is equivalent to 80 parts per billion (ppb). Compliance limits for TTHMs are calculated by averaging the results over the last 4 quarters at each location. The level of TTHMs averaged at one of our sample sites for September 2014 to June 2015 was 84.3 parts per billion (ppb).

What should I 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. We will announce any emergencies on the local news stations as well as advertise in the Patriot Ledger.

MassDEP and MDPH have advised us that there is not a need for our residents to use an alternate water supply. However, if you have specific health concerns, you should consult your doctor.

What does this mean?

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

Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the maximum contaminant level over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys or central nervous system and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. There are no known short term acute impacts.

You do not need to use an alternate water supply such as bottled water. However, if you have specific health concerns, please consult your doctor.

What happened? What is being done?

The risk of illness from TTHMs is much lower than the risk of illness from drinking water that has not been disinfected. Regardless, the Town is committed to addressing the violation of the TTHM limit. The Town has entered into a Consent Order with the DEP to correct this violation. Immediate actions will likely include flushing of the water mains in the areas of Town subject to possible elevated levels of TTHMs. A more long-term approach will include the implementation of our consultant's recommendations to achieve compliance with the TTHM standards. These system improvements have yet to be determined but must be completed and operational no later than July 2018.

For more information, please contact Water Superintendent Neal Merritt at 781-826-3189.

This public notice is sent to you by the Town of Hanover
PWS ID# 4122000
July 29, 2015

Please share this information with all the other people who may drink our 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.