

**TOWN OF HAMILTON,
MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) MCL
Violation**

The Town of Hamilton’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.

Hamilton’s drinking water is treated and disinfected with chlorine. In addition to testing for any bacteria in the distribution system, the water is also routinely tested quarterly at two (2) 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 (DBPs) in drinking water. This includes substances known as Trihalomethanes, collectively called Total Trihalomethanes, or TTHMs.

The EPA standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL) for TTHMs is 80 micrograms per liter (µg/L) which is equivalent to 80 parts per billion (ppb), calculated as a locational running annual average (LRAA). Compliance with the standard is determined each quarter, for each

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sample location, by calculating the average TTHM concentrations using the results reported for the past four calendar quarters (i.e. 12 months).

The 2018 4TH quarter and 2019 1st quarter sampling results show that the Town of Hamilton’s water system exceeded the drinking water standard for TTHMs. The calculated LRAAs for TTHMs at the affected sample site were 82.88 and 86.62, respectively. Due to a clerical error that was recently discovered, the exceedance that occurred in the 4th quarter sampling was only just identified.

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. As with any treated natural water source, if you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at an increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water. Information is also available at the following websites:

- <https://www.epa.gov/region8-waterops/stage-2-disinfectants-and-disinfection-byproducts-rule-stage-2-dbpr-compliance>

- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/310-cmr-22-00-massachusetts-drinking-water-regulations.html> or MassDEP Drinking Water Program at 617-292-5770.
- <http://www.hamiltonma.gov>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours. However, *some people who drink water containing Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.*

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS BEING DONE?

TTHM are four (4) volatile organic chemicals which form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water. TTHMs form in drinking water as a result of the disinfection (chlorination) process. TTHM can continue to increase as the water ages in the distribution system and also due to source water quality, temperature and other factors.

The Town has been working with MassDEP and our water system consultant to evaluate and correct this problem as quickly as possible. Since the noted exceedances, the Town has been routinely flushing its water system within the problem area to remove organic material from the water mains and reduce water age to minimize the formation of TTHMs within the distribution system. In addition, the Town has discontinued the use of one of its wells which may have contributed to the TTHM exceedances.

The Town has also increased its TTHM monitoring from quarterly to monthly with MassDEP input to evaluate the effectiveness of this short-term solution. The Town plans to continue performing routine flushing and monitoring as needed to mitigate the formation of TTHMs as much as possible until a long-term solution can be implemented.

The Town is currently working with its water system consultant on a long-term solution to alleviate the formation of future TTHMs including the installation of a pre-treatment system at the plant to remove organics from the source wells along with a possible TTHM removal aeration system for the plant's clear well. Both of these solutions are currently being evaluated by the Town's water system consultant, and an expedited design will follow to have these upgrades in place as soon as practical.

For more information, please visit our website at www.hamiltonma.gov or contact the Department of Public Works at 978-626-5226.

**This public notice is sent to you by the
Town of Hamilton
PWS ID# 3119000
March 25th, 2019**

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.

