

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Wareham Fire District Failed to Perform Activities Required to Address Coliform Bacteria Contamination of the Water System

During recent routine monitoring in November, 2019, our public water system (PWS) tested positive for total coliform. Our PWS was notified on 11/5/19 verbally by our laboratory of one total coliform positive (E.Coli absent) routine sample collected 11/4/19. We failed to collect three repeat samples within 24 hours of notification by the lab.

Failure to collect the required repeat samples is a Revised Total Coliform Treatment Technique Trigger (RTCR TTT), which required a RTCR Level 1 Assessment be completed by 12/3/19. We failed to complete the RTCR Level 1 Assessment by the due date. Failure to complete the assessment by the due date required public notice by 1/2/2020.

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 during these assessments.

We failed to notify MassDEP SERO of the RTCR TTT within the required timeframe, which is a reporting violation. We failed to conduct the required assessment within the required timeframe; we failed report this treatment technique violation to MassDEP within the required timeframe. We failed to notify the public within the required timeframe; we failed to notify this violation to MassDEP within the required timeframe.

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.

As our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did 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.

(Continued on back page)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER (continued)

What was done?

We have taken the following action: To prevent a failure to collect repeat samples from occurring again in the future the Wareham Fire District has posted the RTCR flow chart on the wall at the water department office. PWS staff have been instructed to review the flow chart upon notification by the laboratory of a total coliform positive sample(s) and to contact MassDEP SERO to ensure all required actions are taken according to MassDEP Drinking Water Regulations.

We completed the RTCR Level 1 Assessment as required by MassDEP SERO. The RTCR Level 1 Assessment was submitted to MassDEP SERO on January 16, 2020. This situation is now considered resolved.

We will provide this notice via direct delivery to our customers as required by MassDEP SERO by the earliest date possible.

For more information, please contact Andrew Reid at 508-295-0450 or 2550 Cranberry Highway, Wareham, MA 02571.

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