

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATED TO TRIHALOMETHANES (TTHM'S) IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

QUESTION: WHAT ARE TRIHALOMETHANES (TTHM'S) AND WHY DO I NEED TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN IT IS PRESENT IN THE DRINKING WATER?

ANSWER: Trihalomethanes are chemicals that are created in a water distribution system when chlorine used to disinfect water from bacterial contamination reacts with the bacteria (organic material). In other words, they are a by-product of the disinfection process. Based upon Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) studies and standards, individuals who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) over many years, may experience problems with their liver, kidneys or central nervous system and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

QUESTION: HAVE I BEEN PUT AT RISK BECAUSE I DRANK MOUNTAIN WATER DISTRICT WATER?

ANSWER: No. Based upon the EPA warning, increased risk comes with consuming water with TTHM's over the MCL for many years. The Mountain Water District's water system last experienced a TTHM exceedance in the spring of 2016. We have been in compliance with the MCL requirements for the last year. Therefore, anyone consuming MWD water has not been exposed to drinking water in excess of the MCL for many years since these exceedances have been periodic and not continuous. However, if you have particular health concerns or have other pre-existing health issues, it is recommended that you discuss this notice with your health care professional.

QUESTION: I GOT SICK IN THE SPRING WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH FOOD POISONING. DID DRINKING MOUNTAIN WATER DISTRICT'S WATER WITH TTHM'S CAUSE THIS?

ANSWER: No. TTHM's do not cause food poisoning or create immediate sickness. Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, such as E. Coli or fecal coliform ingested from a variety of sources. Any sickness from TTHM's would be created through excessive exposure over a long period of time.

QUESTION: IF THE WATER IS SAFE TO DRINK, WHY AM I GETTING THIS NOTICE?

ANSWER: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires a water system to provide this mandatory notice when a water standard is not met. As a customer and consumer of a product (in this case, Mountain Water District water), you have the right to know what is in the water you are consuming. Receiving this notice is not unlike reading the mandatory ingredient labels, nutritional information and warning labels that are placed on all food products purchased in the United States.

QUESTION: WHAT IS MOUNTAIN WATER DISTRICT DOING TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN?

ANSWER: The Mountain Water District is a very complex system in which we produce and/or purchase the water we supply depending upon the area of the county in which you live. The District maintains over 1,000 miles of water line that transports water across the county and out to very remote areas where consumption is low and turnover is difficult. The most effective, immediate thing that the District can do is to flush the system at a quicker pace. We have increased our flushing of dead end line areas in an effort to keep the water turnover rate high in all areas of the system and are purchasing an auto-flushing device to better turn over the water in the lines in the far reaches of the system. Long term solutions to this problem involve capital infrastructure improvements to the system and require funding scenarios which are being sought to fund solutions such as installation of tank mixers and more automatic flushing devices for the remote areas within our service territory to keep the water in these areas turned over.

QUESTION: THIS VIOLATION HAPPENED IN APRIL. WHY AM I JUST NOW, IN JULY, BEING INFORMED OF THIS?

ANSWER: Unlike coliform testing which is simply a presence or absence test where results can be yielded in 24 to 48 hours, testing for TTHM's requires determining a concentration of the substance in micrograms per liter (parts per billion). This type of testing has a much longer period before results are determined which can be from two (2) to four (4) weeks. Once a violation is confirmed by the Kentucky Division of Water, a violation notice must be issued and then the notice must be prepared, reviewed and approved before being printed and distributed. Unfortunately, this can take up to thirty (30) days

to complete. However, please note that the notice is provided to our customers within the thirty (30) day notice period as required by the KDOW and EPA.

QUESTION: HAVE I BEEN DRINKING WATER WITH HIGH LEVELS OF TTHM'S SINCE APRIL?

ANSWER: There is no way to determine that you have been drinking water with high levels of TTHM's at a specific time or at a specific location within the distribution system. TTHM sampling and testing is not a "real time" determination, meaning that results are representative of a system only for the date and time the sample is taken. If such a test were taken the next day, the previous day or today, the concentrations would more than likely not be the same. The best representation of what a TTHM test does is that it is a "snapshot" of the system on the day the sample is taken. Furthermore, EPA and state regulations require that we take samples at four (4) standard locations every quarter (every three months). We take additional samples over and above those required sites at purchase points and at the water treatment plant as well, every quarter. These four (4) "snapshots" are each averaged with 3 previous quarters for that site and if we do not meet the standard for even just one (1) sample site, it indicates that we need to more in that area to eliminate the cause and bring our average down. As indicated above, the Mountain Water District has plans to increase flushing and is seeking funding for capital improvements to remedy the situation.

QUESTION: WHAT ASSURANCE CAN YOU GIVE ME THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, as with any water system, there can be no guarantees that this will not happen again. However, the Mountain Water District can assure you that we continually sample and test our water in accordance with state and federal regulations. We continue to improve the system through capital programs in an effort to maintain the safety and quality of our water.

QUESTION: IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT AND SAFE USING MOUNTAIN WATER DISTRICT'S WATER?

ANSWER: As a customer and a consumer of our water, we welcome your input and observations related to the water you use. You are our first line of defense in detecting a problem

within our distribution system. If you discover or notice any changes to the water such as discoloration, strange odor or taste, low pressure, etc., or if you have any questions related to the water, you should contact the Mountain Water District office at 606-631-9162 or email the Office/Compliance Manager at tolson@mtwater.org. We will do our best to answer your questions in a timely manner.