



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Public Notification About Drinking Water Test Results
from the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) is notifying its customers of an exceedance of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for haloacetic acids (HAA5). Sample results from March indicated that HAA5 exceeded regulatory limits established by MassDEP's Safe Drinking Water regulations. The exceedance was not an immediate health hazard and customers may continue consuming and using their water as normal.

HAA5 Regulation

The presence of elevated HAA5 in drinking water is not an immediate health hazard. If this had been a public health emergency, customers would have been notified within 24 hours.

HAA5 is regulated because some studies suggest that exposure to HAA5 in excess of the MCL *over many years* (i.e. a lifetime) may result in an increased risk of developing health problems. The MCL set for HAA5 provides a wide margin of protection against health effects.

Per the notification, customers with concerns about severe or acute health vulnerabilities, or about infants or fragile elderly, should contact their health care provider to discuss any additional steps they may wish take to limit their exposure.

About HAA5

HAA5 forms when chlorine reacts with dissolved natural organic matter found in surface water supplies such as Cobble Mountain Reservoir, which supplies the Commission's drinking water. Dissolved natural organic matter enters the reservoir from rain and snow running over natural plant matter in the forest.



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The above-average rainfall in 2018 increased the levels of dissolved natural organic matter in Cobble Mountain Reservoir, resulting in more reaction with chlorine and thus higher levels of HAA5. Levels of dissolved natural organic matter are decreasing, but still remain elevated.

Chlorine is utilized to disinfect waterborne pathogens (such as *E. coli*, cholera, and typhoid), which are considered the largest and most immediate risks associated with drinking water. Chlorine has been used to prevent waterborne illness since the early 20th century.

Though HAA5 levels generally decreased since December, the Commission expects exceedances of the HAA5 MCL to persist at least through 2019. This is in part because the regulatory limit is a running annual average, and elevated results from December 2018 and March 2019 will factor into future compliance calculations.

Short and Long Term Solutions

In order to reduce HAA5 levels in the distribution system, the Commission has modified its existing treatment processes to the extent feasible to remove as much dissolved natural organic matter as possible. However, the Commission's legacy water treatment plant was not designed to remove dissolved natural organic matter at these elevated levels.

A comprehensive plan for the water treatment plant has been underway for two years, in part in anticipation of the potential for this issue. A \$70 million plan for system upgrades, which will address HAA5 through more effective NOM removal, has been initiated and will be designed and built over the next four years. These upgrades include:

- 60 MGD Dissolved Air Floatation (DAF) Clarification Process
- Rapid Sand Filter Upgrades
- New Electrical System
- New Chemical Storage and Feed Building

Additional Information

The Commission's West Parish Filters Water Treatment Facility in Westfield, first built in 1909, underwent its most significant modernization upgrade in 1974. Regulations related to HAA5 were first adopted in the late 1990s, and a revision to those regulations was implemented in 2012. The Commission has continually optimized the water treatment plant to meet various evolving regulatory changes, and advocates the importance of renewing water infrastructure investment to meet 21st century scientific understanding and regulations.

A public information session for customers with questions about the HAA5 exceedance and/or the Commission's planned solutions will be held on **Monday, April 22 at 6 PM** in Room 220 in Springfield City Hall.



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Customers with questions about the public notification or HAA5 should contact the Commission by calling **413-310-3501**, or by emailing info@waterandsewer.org.

More information can be found on the Commission's website at:
<http://waterandsewer.org/haa5-frequently-asked-questions/>

MassDEP also provides information on HAA5 at:
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/haa5-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers>

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