



**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) in drinking water. Sample results taken on March 2, 2021 indicate that levels for HAA5 at 1 of the 8 sample locations exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) established by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s (MassDEP) Safe Drinking Water regulations.

The MCL is 60 parts per billion (ppb) and is calculated as the average of the results from the past four quarters at an individual sample site. All individual sample-site results from March 2, 2021 were below 60 ppb. Since the annual average at one sample site exceeded 60 ppb, however, the results still qualify as an exceedance of the MCL. The annual average at the one location was 63 ppb. The Commission first experienced elevated HAA5 in September 2018, which led to the violation of the drinking water standard in successive quarters until December 2020.

| Sample Location | 3/2/21 Result - parts per billion (ppb) | 12/1/20 Result (ppb) | 9/1/20 Result (ppb) | 6/3/20 Result (ppb) | Locational Running Annual Average (ppb) |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Center St. Fire Station, Ludlow | 59 | 53 | 59 | 80 | 63 |

The exceedance was not an immediate health hazard and customers may continue consuming and using their water as normal. If this had been a public health emergency, customers would have been notified within 24 hours.

Raw Water Quality and Near-Term Mitigation Measures

HAA5 forms when dissolved natural organic matter (NOM) interacts with chlorine. The amount of chlorine necessary to maintain safe disinfection is determined by the amount and types of dissolved NOM in Cobble Mountain Reservoir, the main source of the drinking water supply. Individual sample-site results from March 2, 2021, were all below 60 ppb, indicating that dissolved NOM levels have decreased from previously elevated levels. The improvement in water quality results is due to changes in the reservoir water quality as well as measures implemented by the Commission to reduce HAA5 levels. These measures include reducing water storage time; optimizing treatment processes and chlorine dosages; and flushing the distribution system.



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The Commission expects exceedances of the HAA5 MCL may re-occur throughout the remainder of 2021. This is in part because the regulatory limit for HAA5 is a running annual average, and previous elevated results from 2020 and 2021 may impact future compliance calculations. The next sampling will take place in June 2021.

HAA5 Regulation

HAA5 is regulated because some studies suggest that consumption of water with HAA5 in excess of the MCL *over many years* (i.e. decades or a lifetime) may result in potential health risks. The MCL set for HAA5 provides a wide margin of protection against health effects.

There is no need to boil or filter water, or to drink bottled water. Customers with very fragile health vulnerabilities or specific health-related questions may wish to consult with their doctors about whether any additional measures are prudent to limit exposure.

Permanent Solutions

The Commission has been actively working to permanently prevent elevated HAA5 since 2015, when it initiated a comprehensive planning process to upgrade the West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant. While the Commission has regularly optimized existing plant processes to meet regulatory changes over the years, the plant's last comprehensive upgrade was in 1974. Regulations related to HAA5 were first adopted in 1998, and revised in 2012.

The planning process is already well advanced and will result in significant plant upgrades that will ensure consistent water quality and regulatory compliance for HAA5. A pilot study was completed between fall 2019 and fall 2020 to determine the most effective treatment process to remove more dissolved NOM and reduce HAA5. Results from the pilot study will inform the design of permanent treatment plant upgrades necessary to reduce disinfection by-products, including HAA5. As a possible interim solution, and with approval from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), results of the pilot study were also utilized to conduct a half-plant trial of an alternative coagulant to remove more NOM within existing treatment processes. The trial did not yield sufficient improvements, underscoring the need for permanent treatment plant upgrades.

A panel of national experts convened by the Commission is guiding these activities. The design of the permanent treatment plant upgrades is scheduled to begin in FY22. After the design is approved by MassDEP, construction will begin in FY24 at an estimated cost of \$167.6 million. The Commission is accelerating this work as quickly as possible while committing significant resources to the process.

Additional Information

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>

END