



**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 the disinfection byproduct (DBPs) haloacetic acids (HAA5) in the drinking water. Sample results taken in the first week of December indicated that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL) established by drinking water regulations for HAA5 at 6 of the 8 sample locations.

The MCL for HAA5 is 60 parts per billion (ppb) calculated as the average of the results from the past four quarters at an individual sample site. An MCL is calculated as a 12-month locational running annual average (LRAA) of quarterly samples.

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.

To address exceedances for DBPs including HAA5 and replace end-of-life infrastructure the Commission is building a [new West Parish Water Treatment Plant](#). Design of the new treatment plant has been completed and the bid for the construction contract will be awarded this month. A [new video](#) explaining how the treatment plant will resolve exceedances of DBPs is also now available.

HAA5 Formation

HAA5 forms when chlorine reacts with dissolved natural organic matter (NOM) found in surface water bodies such as the Commission's Cobble Mountain Reservoir, the main source of the drinking water supply. The amount of chlorine necessary to maintain safe disinfection to protect against viruses and bacteria is determined by the amount and types of dissolved NOM in the raw water. Raw water quality can also be impacted by seasonal reservoir turnover, during which the top layer of water shifts to the bottom of the reservoir.

The Commission's West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant was last modernized in 1974 and is not capable of removing the current levels of NOM to the extent necessary to meet DBP regulations. The amount of NOM in the raw water and necessary chlorine dosages contributed to elevated HAA5 levels in the distribution system.

DBP Regulation

Regulations related to DBPs were first adopted in 1998 and revised in 2012. DBPs are regulated because some studies suggest that consumption of water with DBPs in excess of the MCL *over many years* (i.e. decades or a



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lifetime) may result in potential health risks. The MCL set for HAA5 provides a wide margin of protection against health effects.

The regulatory limit for DBPs is a running annual average, and elevated results from past quarters may impact future compliance calculations. The next sampling will take place in September 2024.

Solutions

The Commission continues to optimize the existing treatment process to maximize NOM removal while advancing construction of the new treatment plant as quickly as possible. The new treatment plant will include modern technology to remove more NOM and resolve HAA5 exceedances.

Design and construction of a modern treatment plant is a complex process. Until the new treatment plant comes online the Commission expects there will continue to be exceedances of the MCL for HAA5, especially as the region experiences more severe weather patterns and events. Customers will receive notification any time there is an exceedance.

Complete: Planning, Design, and Phase 1 Construction

- The West Parish Filters Facility Improvements Plan, initiated in 2015, was completed in 2021 and determined a multi-phase approach to replace the water treatment plant.
- Construction of a new Backwash Facility was completed in 2023. This facility represents the first phase of construction of the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant and will enable water treatment during construction. The Backwash Facility will also be connected to the new plant when complete.

Nearing Completion: Procurement

- Design of the new treatment plant is complete.
- The bid for the construction contract will be awarded in July 2024.

Upcoming: Construction

- Construction of the new treatment plant is expected to start later this year and be completed in September 2028.

Available Now: New Video

- The Commission recently released a new video that explains how water is currently treated at West Parish Filters, why the new treatment plant is needed, and how it will resolve DBPs. The new video can be viewed on the Commission's YouTube page (@SpfldWaterSewer) or on the Commission's webpage about the project, <https://waterandsewer.org/new-water-plant/>.

Additional Information

Customers with questions about the public notification or DBPs 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:

<https://waterandsewer.org/dbps-faqs/>

MassDEP also provides information on HAA5:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/factsheet-haloacetic-acids-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers/download>

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