

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATED TO HALOACETIC ACIDS (HAA<sub>5</sub>) IN YOUR  
DRINKING WATER  
DECEMBER 11, 2018**

**QUESTION:** WHAT ARE HALOACETIC ACIDS (HAA<sub>5</sub>) AND WHY DO I NEED TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN IT IS PRESENT IN THE DRINKING WATER?

**ANSWER:** Haloacetic Acids 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 Haloacetic Acids 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 BLOOMFIELD WATER?

**ANSWER:** No. Based upon the EPA warning, increased risk comes with consuming water with HAA<sub>5</sub>'s over the (MCL) for many years. Although the exceedence has occurred for four consecutive quarters, anyone consuming Bloomfield water have not been exposed to drinking water in excess of the MCL for many years since this exceedence has occurred for one year. However, if you have particular health concerns or have other pre-existing health issues, it is recommended you discuss this notice with your health care professional.

**QUESTION:** I GOT SICK IN APRIL WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH FOOD POISONING. DID DRINKING BLOOMFIELD WATER WITH HAA<sub>5</sub>'S CAUSE THIS?

**ANSWER:** No. Haloacetic Acids 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 Haloacetic Acids 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 provide this mandatory notice when a water standard is not met. As a customer and consumer of a product (in this case Bloomfield water) you have a 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: IS THIS NOTICE AND VIOLATION RELATED TO, OR THE SAME AS THE NOTICE ABOUT LEAD THAT WE RECEIVED IN THE PAST?

ANSWER: There is not a direct relationship between these two exceedences, however, the water treatment processes performed by the City of Newark to eliminate their lead action level exceedences may have an indirect impact on increased Haloacetic Acids. The City of Newark is currently working on modifying and improving their treatment facilities and processes. It is assumed that these actions will substantially reduce haloacetic Acids from entering our system

QUESTION: WHAT IS BLOOMFIELD DOING TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN?

ANSWER: We purchase our water, fully treated, from the City of Newark. We therefore, do not treat or disinfect our water. We have no direct control as to the amount of chlorine added to the water we purchase. Haloacetic Acids normally form in areas of the distribution system where the water has a tendency to move at a slower velocity and not get expelled from the system through normal water use and consumption. This normally happens at dead ends and areas with higher vertical elevations where circulation in the system may be slower. The most effective, immediate thing we can do is flush the system to eliminate or evacuate this water from the system. Hydrants are flushed from the source outward so that the freshly treated water at the interconnections is drawn into the system at a quicker pace. The township, through the Bloomfield Fire Department flushes all our hydrants annually. The Engineering Department over the past several years has been performing capital programs to eliminate some of the problematic, dead-ends in the system. Dead ends are locations where the water does not efficiently circulate through the system thereby creating areas where bacteria and other pollutants can potentially accumulate. We have eliminated dead ends at the following locations:

Plymouth Court.  
Pilgrim Court.  
Bukowski Place.  
Cook Road.  
Evans Road.  
Carlton Terrace.  
Bromley Place.  
Watchung Place.

In addition to watermain looping or dead-end elimination, the township has been undertaking, major cleaning and lining of our large 12-inch and 16-inch watermains. Many of these lines were constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and have not been maintained to expected levels. Cleaning and lining of these mains will increase water quality by removing rust deposits and sediment that may have accumulated in the lines over many years which also contribute to the formation of Haloacetic Acids and Trihalomethanes. Normal hydrant flushing helps remove these sediments but not as efficiently as cleaning and lining the mains. The first phase of cleaning and lining has been completed. This first phase targeted the 12-inch main in the Belleville Avenue area

and cleaned and lined over a half-mile of watermain. A second phase of watermain cleaning and lining is scheduled for the first half of 2019.

QUESTION: WILL THE STEPS BLOOMFIELD IS TAKING ELIMINATE THE HALOACETIC ACID PROBLEM IN OUR WATER?

The steps Bloomfield is taking will go a long way in solving our water quality issues; however, until the City of Newark resolves their treatment issues, we may see a reduction in the occurrence of Haloacetic Acid or other Disinfection By-Products, but not a complete elimination of the problem. Bloomfield is also designing a new water pumping station that will introduce a supply of water from the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission in Wanaque, New Jersey. This is a different source and treatment of water from the Newark system. It is anticipated that introducing a different supply of water into our system will also improve our water quality.

QUESTION: THE NOTICE I RECEIVED STATES THAT THIS VIOLATION HAPPENED OVER A MONTH AGO, WHY AM I ONLY NOW, NEARLY A MONTH LATER, BEING INFORMED OF THIS?

ANSWER: Testing for Haloacetic Acids requires determining a concentration of the substance in micrograms per liter (parts per billion). This type of testing requires a much longer period before results are determined which can be from two to four weeks. Once a violation is confirmed by the NJDEP, 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 days to complete. However, please note that the notice is provided to our customers within the thirty-day notice period required by the NJDEP and EPA.

QUESTION: WHAT ASSURANCE CAN YOU GIVE ME THAT HIS WILL NOT CONTINUE TO HAPPEN?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, as with any water system, there can be no guarantees that this will not happen again. However, the Engineering Department can assure you that we continually sample and test our water in accordance to 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 THER ANYTHING I CAN DO TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT AND SAFE USING BLOOMFIELD WATER?

ANSWER: As a customer and 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 Engineering Department at 973-680-4130 or preferably, via e-mail, directly to the Township Water Operator, Paul Lasek at [plasek@bloomfieldtwpnj.com](mailto:plasek@bloomfieldtwpnj.com). We will do our best to answer your questions in a timely manner.