

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

## DRINKING WATER NOTICE

Tests show COLIFORM BACTERIA & E.COLI in the drinking water

### West Boylston Water District

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. A total of 4 samples collected from our system during September 2008 showed the presence of bacteria. The maximum contaminant level (MCL) or standard is that no more than 1 sample per month may do so. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct the situation.

On Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the District collected 17 routine coliform samples from its groundwater wells and from locations in the distribution system. On Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the District was notified by the laboratory that preliminary results indicated that 5 samples may be positive for the presence of total coliform bacteria. The District immediately began to introduce chlorine into the system and at one storage tank. On Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the District was notified by the laboratory that 4 samples of the 17 collected confirmed the presence of total coliform and E.Coli bacteria. The District continued to monitor chlorine residual levels and immediately collected a total of 25 samples from wells and locations throughout the distribution system. On September 16<sup>th</sup> the District was notified by the laboratory that coliform bacteria or E.coli were not detected in any of the samples. Although we have corrected the situation we are required to provide this notice to our customers.

E.coli bacteria can make you sick, and are a particular concern for people with weakened immune systems. To ensure that the distribution system is free of total coliform bacteria and to minimize the potential exposure to E. coli, the West Boylston Water District immediately began chlorination of the distribution system. The chlorination system will remain on-line until the District has completed an inspection of its storage tank, which is scheduled for October 2008.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

**You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions.**

However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

- People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.
- *Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

**THIS IS NOT AN EMERGENCY.**

**If it had been you would have been notified immediately.**

Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or contamination in a storage tank.

*E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.*

The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

In response to the recent bacteria detections, we began adding chlorine to disinfect the water and to achieve a chlorine residual in the water system. Chlorine and a slight discoloration may be detected in the water. Aquarium owners and users of kidney dialysis machines are advised to treat or filter the water before use. This measure has been approved by MassDEP.

## STEPS WE ARE TAKING

**Our system immediately took the following corrective actions:**

We immediately chlorinated and flushed the water system. We did not find any of these bacteria in our subsequent testing. We will continue to chlorinate the water system and have scheduled a tank inspection for October 2008.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information please contact:

Michael Coveney, Superintendent, West Boylston Water District at 508-835-3025.