



TOWN OF AGAWAM
Department of Public Works
AGAWAM WATER DEPARTMENT

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Haloacetic Acid 5 (HAA5) MCL Violation in Agawam

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results from samples taken on 12/5/2018 show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for HAA5 at one of our four locations, 1057 North Westfield Street. The standard for HAA5 is 60 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), also known as parts per billion (PPB). It is determined by averaging all samples collected by our system for the last 12 months. The level of HAA5 averaged at our system for March 2018 to December 2018 was 65 $\mu\text{g/L}$. The range at this location for the last 12 month period was 43-110 $\mu\text{g/L}$.

What should I do?

- There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours. HAA5 are five haloacetic acid compounds which form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water. *People who drink water containing HAA5s in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.*

Please see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/haa5-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers> for a fact sheet on HAA5s.

What is being done?

We are working closely with our water supplier at the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC). The higher than normal rainfall in 2018 resulted in a 50 percent increase in the amount of natural organic matter in Cobble Mountain Reservoir, which is the main source of the system's drinking water. The increased amount of naturally occurring organic matter interacting with necessary disinfectant levels resulted in higher than typical HAA5 levels in the Commission's treated water. This is a challenge currently being experienced at water systems across the region due to the abnormally high levels of precipitation in 2018.

A return to more normal precipitation patterns in 2019 could reduce the amount of organic matter in the raw water and lead to a reduction in HAA5. In the meantime, the Agawam Water Department and SWSC are working with MassDEP evaluating modifications to make to its existing treatment processes to reduce the levels of HAA5 in the distribution system.

The Commission is also developing a facilities improvement plan that will identify long-term treatment process improvement options at West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant to more effectively remove organic matter and HAA5.

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.

For more information, please contact Deputy Superintendent John Decker at (413) 821-0627 or at water@agawam.ma.us.

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Agawam Water Department

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