



AGAWAM WATER DEPARTMENT • PWS ID#: 1005000
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER



Haloacetic Acid 5 (HAA5) MCL Violation in Agawam

The Agawam Water Department (PWS ID#: 1005000) 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 September 6, 2019 show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for HAA5 at two of our four locations, 1057 North Westfield Street and 36 Main Street. The standard for HAA5 is 60 micrograms per liter (µg/L), also known as parts per billion (ppb). It is determined by averaging all samples collected by our system for the last 12 months, this is also known as a locational running annual average (LRAA). The following table has the HAA5 results for the two locations for the October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019 monitoring period:

Sample Location	LRAA Q3/2019	Readings in LRAA (Q4-18, Q1-19, Q2-19, & Q3-19)	Most Recent Sample Result
1057 N. Westfield St.	71.7 µg/L	110.0, 50.9, 59.4, & 66.6 µg/L	66.6 µg/L
36 Main St.	63.6 µg/L	77.0, 55.7, 52.3, & 69.4 µg/L	69.4 µg/L

The other two sampling locations have LRAAs below the MCL.

What does this mean?

You are advised that the water can continue to be consumed as usual. This is not an emergency, and there was no immediate or short-term health risks. 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 or visit our website at <http://www.agawam.ma.us/water/haa5> for more information

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water, drink bottled water, use a filter 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.

Why did this happen:

The higher than normal rainfall in 2018 resulted in a 50 percent increase in the amount of dissolved natural organic matter (NOM) in Cobble Mountain Reservoir, which is the main source of Agawam’s drinking water. The increased amount of dissolved NOM interacting with the necessary disinfectant levels has resulted in higher than typical HAA5 levels in the treated water provided by SWSC to Agawam. Although the levels of dissolved NOM are decreasing, they are still elevated. We also believe that a fire flow test that preceded the sampling may have contributed to the elevated HAA5 readings at 36 Main Street. In support of this theory, the chlorine residual reading for the DBPs was approximately 80% higher than the average of readings when bacteria samples were taken before and after the disinfection byproduct sampling.

What is being done?

We are working closely with our water supplier at the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC). They have modified the existing treatment process to reduce the levels of HAA5 in the distribution system while maintaining safe chlorine levels. Though NOM has decreased from its highest levels in 2018, SWSC continues to see elevated NOM in the raw water.

A comprehensive facilities improvement plan for West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant is also underway. The plan is analyzing various long-term treatment process upgrades to more effectively remove dissolved NOM and reduce HAA5. A pilot study of differing treatment processes to determine the most effective technologies for removal of organic matter commenced in September and will be completed in 2020. This study will help determine the necessary upgrades to make to the treatment plant to address long-term water quality issues including HAA5. A new enhanced sampling program underway in the reservoirs will also inform the water treatment plant upgrades. Additionally, the SWSC has a Source Water Protection Plan that identifies land management tools to optimize raw water quality. SWSC states it continuously explores and implements ways to optimize raw water quality. We also continue to investigate options for us to improve water quality.

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 DPW Deputy Superintendent John Decker at (413) 821-0600 or at water@agawam.ma.us.

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Did you Know?

The combination of rainfall with leaves on our driveways, sidewalks, streets, and parking lots can produce stormflows into local rivers, streams, and lakes that are loaded with nutrients that cause harm to our water resources. Proper use or disposal of leaves will help to avoid these contaminated flows.

The most effective way to reduce stormwater pollution is to stop the pollutants from entering the system in the first place.

- Compost your yard waste
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces
- Watch the weather! Fast release fertilizers should not be applied before a heavy rainfall.
- Never dump anything down storm drains

Fertilizer is available in slow-release or fast –release form. Fast release fertilizer releases the nitrogen almost immediately into the soil. Slow release fertilizer is a more controlled release of the nitrogen, which can reduce the chance of nutrients leaching into groundwater in areas such as sandy soils.

Fall leaves are an important ingredient to a compost pile. Without them, a compost pile may become too wet and create odors. Fall is a great time to start composting because the leaves are abundantly available. During the remainder of the year, compostable food scraps and grass clippings can be layered with leaves, where they will decompose with little odor.

Residential Leaf Disposal Options

Curbside Collection: Residents will receive four fall collections as identified on their route schedule.

Bondi's Island Drop-off: Residents are required to obtain yard waste passes at the DPW office prior to dropping off yard waste.

For more detailed information regarding curbside and drop off regulations, please visit www.agawam.ma.us