

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Peabody's water system is in violation of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, you have a right to know what has happened, what you should do and what the City is doing to correct the situation.

Peabody's drinking water is disinfected with chlorine. In addition to testing for any bacteria in the distribution system, the water is also routinely tested quarterly, at various sites in the distribution system, for the presence of byproducts related to the disinfection process. The EPA sets standards for the maximum levels of both disinfectants and disinfection byproducts (DBP's) in drinking water. This includes substances known as trihalomethanes, collectively called total trihalomethanes or TTHMs.

The EPA Stage 2 DBP Rule, which went into effect in 2012, requires water systems to meet "locational" running annual averages (LRAA) for total TTHM at each of 8 sampling locations. In the past, the City had to report a combined running annual average (RAA) of all samples collected throughout the distribution system and was able to meet EPA requirements. With the more stringent Stage 2 DBP requirements, the City has substantially completed construction of a system to help meet these requirements.

The compliance limits for TTHMs are calculated by averaging the results over the last 4 quarters at each location. In Peabody, the LRAA results for the last 4 quarters show that our system exceeded the maximum contaminant level for TTHMs at two locations. The EPA standard for TTHMs is 80 parts per billion (ppb). Peabody's fourth quarter 2013 LRAA for the two locations were as follows: Central Fire Station 83 ppb, Mount Pleasant Drive 82 ppb.

### What does this mean?

This is not an emergency, nor is there an imminent risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately through local media outlets and the City's NIXLE, Emergency Communication System.

Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the maximum contaminant level over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys or central nervous system and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

### What should I do?

You do not need to use an alternate water supply such as bottled water. However, if you have specific health concerns, please consult your doctor.

### What happened? What is being done?

TTHMs form when free chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic matter (NOM) in water. Lowering TTHM levels may be achieved by removing NOM by upgrading the treatment process, changing from using free chlorine in the water distribution system to using monochloramine to prevent reaction with NOM, or removing TTHMs from the water. Monochloramine is the most suitable option for the City to reduce TTHM formation in the distribution system because it can be implemented more quickly than some of the other options. However, it is important to note that this is the first phase in the process to reduce TTHMs. It may be necessary to implement additional treatment depending on how well monochloramine reduces the TTHMs in the distribution system.

The risk of illness from TTHMs is much lower than the risk of illness from drinking water that has not been disinfected. Regardless, the City is committed to addressing the violation of the TTHM limit. The City has completed the construction phase of the project to build systems at the water treatment plants to convert the distribution system disinfectant from free chlorine to monochloramine, as approved by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). We expect a conversion to monochloramine in January 2014, which will reduce the TTHMs. In addition, the City is working with the DEP to ensure continued compliance with the TTHM standards.

### How do I find out more information?

For more information, please contact the Mayor's Office at (978) 538-5700 or Sharon Cameron, City of Peabody Health Department at (978) 538-5920 for any health related questions.

**This public notice is sent to you by the City Of Peabody**

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**December 13, 2013**

*Please share this information with all the other people who may drink our water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly. You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*