

Special Announcement



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Goddard Space Flight Center
Wallops Flight Facility
Wallops Island, Virginia 23337

No. *12-02*

Date: *March 26, 2012*

Subject: IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

NASA Wallops Main Base - State Water System ID # 3001500 Has Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) Concentration above Drinking Water Standard

The Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) operates the drinking water system and monitors for the presence of over 140 contaminants at locations prior to filtration, as required by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). WFF personnel collect samples on a quarterly basis to measure TTHM. TTHM are common chlorination degradation by-products. WFF adds chlorine to the water as a treatment process to kill harmful microorganisms that may be present naturally. TTHM form when the chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic material and microorganisms in the system, and have a positive correlation with high outdoor temperatures and extended residence time inside plumbing. TTHM water systems are typically highest during the summer months.

This is not an immediate health risk. However, as our customers, you have a right to know the test results, what you can do, and what corrective actions we are taking.

The test results for samples collected at Building E-104 from 2nd quarter 2011 through 1st quarter 2012 indicate that the TTHM running annual average exceeded the drinking water standard. The running annual average for TTHM, which concluded in February (1st quarter) 2012, was 0.085 mg/L, which exceeded the regulatory limit of 0.080 mg/L. This included past elevated results for May (2nd quarter) 2011 (0.100 mg/L) and August (3rd quarter) 2011 (0.104 mg/L). Although November (4th quarter) 2011 (0.070 mg/L) and February (1st quarter) 2012 (0.066 mg/L) results were below the regulatory limit; the results were not low enough to bring the annual (quarterly) average below 0.080 mg/L.

WFF continues to monitor the drinking water systems for TTHM quarterly, in compliance with VDH requirements that were implemented in CY 2005. VDH requires TTHM samples be collected from locations prior to filtration that have extended residence times (the amount of time water is in the pipes between the treatment point and when consumers use it). Long residence times, high temperatures, and low flow rates in buildings all promote formation of TTHM. However, TTHM dissipate rapidly in water that is exposed to air and to cooking temperatures.

What does this mean to you?

Some people who drink water containing TTHM in excess of the limit over many years may

develop problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, or rarely may have an increased risk of developing cancer. The criteria used to develop the TTHM drinking water standard would require an individual to consume at least 2 liters (more than ½ gallon) of unfiltered water with elevated disinfection byproducts every day for 70 years. For more information, access the internet at: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/disinfectionbyproducts.cfm>.

What is being done?

WFF will continue to use chlorine as a disinfectant. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant for water throughout the U.S. WFF has reviewed water system operations, and made chlorination adjustments to reduce the TTHM concentration. WFF Facilities Management Branch personnel are preparing to conduct pilot studies on filtration and aeration technologies to minimize TTHM formation.

WFF also manages a drinking water filtration program and has used activated carbon filters since CY 2003 as a further improvement of water quality for our customers. Activated carbon filters are installed on water fountains and kitchen sinks. A filter maintenance program is in operation to ensure the filters are effective. Activated carbon is an effective method to filter out many water impurities, including up to sixty percent of TTHM; however, VDH regulations mandate that all water quality samples be collected prior to filtration, not post-filtration.

WFF will continue to test the drinking water system quarterly for TTHM. It is possible TTHM will occasionally exceed the regulatory limit because of the requirement to use the average of four consecutive quarters of data. WFF will provide Special Announcements and notifications, as required, informing you should this occur.

What should you do?

WFF water system is in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations to ensure safe drinkable water. You can call the "HELP" desk (x4357) to request that the activated carbon filters in your area be examined and replaced, as necessary. When you drink water that has been carbon filtered, you are unlikely to ingest TTHM above the regulatory limit. You do not need to use an alternative (bottled) water supply. Should you have specific health concerns, consult either the WFF Health Unit Physician or your personal health care provider.

Please share this information with colleagues who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly. You can do this by posting this Special Announcement in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This announcement is provided by Wallops Flight Facility, Environmental Office (Code 250). For more information, contact Owen Hooks, Air & Water Programs Manager, at 757-824-1941.



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