

NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF RAPIDAN SERVICE AUTHORITY'S WILDERNESS WATER SYSTEM

Levels of Haloacetic Acids Above Drinking Water Standards

In keeping with National Primary Drinking Water Regulations, we are obliged to inform you that we may be in violation of state regulations because drinking water being served to our customers in the Wilderness water system did not comply with the Primary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Haloacetic Acids in the 2nd Quarter of 2024.

Haloacetic Acids are a group of chemicals called disinfection byproducts - one of more than 90 contaminants monitored in your drinking water on a regular basis. They are created during the water treatment, storage, and distribution process when naturally occurring organic matter from your source water (the Rapidan River) comes in contact with the chlorine used to disinfect your drinking water. There are several factors which influence the formation of these contaminants, including organics content, chlorine concentration, pH, and temperature.

Drinking water is disinfected to kill bacteria and viruses that cause serious illnesses and, in some cases, death. Disinfecting drinking water with chlorine has dramatically lowered rates of infectious diseases like typhoid, hepatitis, and cholera since its first use in 1908. Your waterworks and the vast majority of other waterworks across the world still use chlorine to protect consumers from disease.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Stage 1 Disinfection Byproducts Rule to regulate Haloacetic Acids went into effect in December 1998. Prior to this, a standard for Haloacetic Acids did not exist. The standard became effective for small surface water and ground water systems in December 2003. The Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 60 parts per billion (PPB) was established by the Environmental Protection Agency to protect individuals against the adverse effects of long-term ingestion of water containing high levels of Haloacetic Acids. Additionally, a margin of safety was built into the standard to protect the most at-risk subgroups of the population (i.e., elderly, children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems) and those who consume significantly more water than two liters per day.

The Environmental Protection Agency used conservative assumptions in establishing the MCL, such as consumption of 2 liters of water per day from the same source over a 70-year lifetime. Given that the basis is long term consumption, the Environmental Protection Agency established the rule to average results over a one-year period instead of looking at any one maximum value.

According to information provided by the Virginia Department of Health, Haloacetic Acids may be a problem if someone is exposed to high levels over a long period of time; however, there is no evidence that Haloacetic Acids cause any acute effects. Research – even after 40 years - is not conclusive but suggests that the risks associated with DBP exposure are **cumulative**. Prolonged, chronic exposure to high concentrations **may** increase disease risk; however, **the levels in your water are not chronically elevated and there are no known acute health effects from these levels of Haloacetic Acids in your drinking water.**

Compliance with the Primary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Haloacetic Acids is based on an average of the prior four quarters of test results for each testing location. In the Wilderness water system, there are four approved testing locations: Ramsay Rd (DS001), Flat Run Rd at Locust Grove Middle School (DS002), Wilderness Shores Way (DS003), and Route 3 at Germanna Community College (DS004). Testing results we received from the 3rd Quarter of 2023 through 2nd Quarter of 2024 show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for Haloacetic Acids at one of four locations. **The standard for Haloacetic Acids is 60 ppb (parts per billion).**

The average level of Haloacetic Acids during the 3rd Quarter of 2023 through 2nd Quarter of 2024 compliance period was **66 ppb at DS004 (Germanna).**

Rapidan Service Authority has been working to resolve the elevated results. We have made changes to the treatment process to improve organics removal. We are also evaluating other treatment, storage, and distribution techniques that will further reduce concentrations of Haloacetic Acids – in coordination with the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water.

While we continue to address this MCL exceedance, you do not need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Animal studies suggest that people who drink water containing Haloacetic Acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. While human studies have not definitively confirmed a direct link between Haloacetic Acids and cancer, the evidence from animal studies suggests that caution is warranted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does this mean levels are high at my home?

A: RSA performs testing at four approved sites throughout the distribution system. Elevated results at one site do not suggest that levels are high across the entire system.

Q: Can I reduce levels at my home?

A: Some point-of-use or point-of-entry filtration devices (carbon filters, reverse osmosis filters) are rated to remove Haloacetic Acids. Such devices must be labeled as compliant with NSF/ANSI Standards 42 and/or 53. Many common pitcher filters and refrigerator filters carry this rating and will remove Haloacetic Acids. Boiling or ultraviolet light treatment are not effective.

For more information, please contact Rapidan Service Authority at (540) 972-2133. Please share this information with 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.

This notice is being sent to you by Rapidan Service Authority.

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