

TOWN OF GUILDERLAND
DEPARTMENT OF WATER
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Peter Barber
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Dear Guilderland Water Customer:

The letter is provided as notice regarding the presence of a disinfection byproduct in our water system. The Town of Guilderland water system was found to have an average concentration of 81.2 micrograms per liter (ug/L) of total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) for the previous four quarters of sampling. This exceeds the maximum contaminant level (MCL) established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) for TTHMs of 80 ug/L on a quarterly rolling average basis. We are required to notify consumers when an MCL is exceeded.

TTHMs are a group of chemicals that are formed in drinking water during disinfection when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic materials in surface water sources. TTHMs are considered disinfection byproducts, which include the individual chemicals chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane and chlorodibromomethane. The amount of TTHMs formed in drinking water during disinfection can change from day to day, depending on temperature, the amount of organic material in the reservoir, the amount of chlorine added, and a variety of other factors.

Disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is highly beneficial to public health. We disinfect our drinking water to kill bacteria and viruses that could cause serious illnesses. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in water supplies in New York State. All public water supply systems that use a surface water source with chlorine for disinfection contain TTHMs to some degree.

Some studies suggest that people who drank water containing very high levels of TTHMs over the course of 20 to 30 years may have an increased risk of certain health effects including the risk for cancer and low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. However, these studies could not rule out the role of other factors that could have resulted in the observed increased risks and other similar

studies do not show an increased risk for these health effects. Some animal studies with very high exposure show that some TTHMs may increase risks for these health effects, but the exposure in these studies was much greater than could result from the normal use of drinking water.

The USEPA reviewed these studies and concluded that while there is no causal relationship between disinfection byproducts including TTHMs and human health effects, the balance of the information warranted stronger regulations to limit the amount of TTHMs in drinking water while still allowing for adequate disinfection. The risks for adverse health effects from TTHMs in drinking water are very small compared to the risks for waterborne illness such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid and other ailments from drinking inadequately disinfected water. If you have specific personal health concerns, please consult your doctor.

The Town of Guilderland water treatment plant operations staff is actively working to reduce TTHMs in the water system through changes in the water treatment process as well as the storage and distribution of water. At present, the water is suitable to drink, cook with and bathe in. Although we do not consider the following measures necessary to avoid health effects, you may use water pitchers containing an activated carbon filter or install a tap-mounted activated carbon filter for water. For additional information, you may wish to review the following resources:

<http://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/stage-1-and-stage-2-disinfectants-and-disinfection-byproductsrules> <https://www.cdc.gov/safewater/chlorination-byproducts.html>

We take our responsibility to provide safe drinking water very seriously and will continue to work to ensure the quality of our water. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Tim McIntyre, Superintendent of the Guilderland Water District at 518-456-6474; Dean Sim, Chief Water Plant Operator at 518-861-6510 or the Albany County Health Department at 518-447-4620.