

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Charlevoix Water Plant Did Not Meet Treatment Requirements

On February 10, 2016 the City of Charlevoix (City) violated State and Federal drinking water regulations for failure to completely treat its drinking water. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation.

What happened?

The City draws drinking water from Lake Michigan. State and Federal regulations require extensive treatment of surface water in order to kill and remove any pathogens that may be present. On February 10, the City under-fed and was at minimum effective level for a water treatment compound called alum. When mixed with water, alum attaches to and binds up pathogens that may be present in the water. Also for an indeterminate time period, a portion of the treatment plant, the flocculation unit was not operating. This flocculation unit allows for the alum to come into contact with pathogens. Because of their importance in removing pathogens, underfeeding alum and the flocculation unit not working are violations of State drinking water regulations. Operator error in setting the alum pump feed rate on February 10, 2016 most likely caused the under-feed. The cause of the flocculation unit not working is unknown.

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do at this time. The problem was corrected.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. We do not know of any contamination, and none of our testing has shown disease-causing organisms in the drinking water. Water is treated with both alum and chlorine; chlorine treatment was unaffected on the day in question.

What is being done?

The City has collected bacteriological samples and is monitoring chlorine residuals in the City. We performed bacteriological tests on February 15, 17, and 19; all tests were negative for the presence of harmful bacteria.

Longer Term Response: The Water Treatment Plant has outdated equipment and technology that relies heavily on manual operations that can result in these types of situations. The City has been working with an engineering consultant to assess the plant and has been phasing in the recommendations for plant upgrades. The next planned upgrade will reduce the reliance on manual operations by implementing a state-of-the-art Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system. In addition, with the assistance of a water treatment consultant, the City will be optimizing the water treatment process through bench testing in the lab to determine the best water treatment methods to continue to provide high quality drinking water.

For more information, please contact the City Manager's Office at 231-547-3270 or 210 State Street, Charlevoix, Michigan 49720.

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.

This notice is being sent to you by the City of Charlevoix.