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www.portlandoregon.gov/water



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Tests Detected Coliform Bacteria in Portland Water Bureau Drinking Water in SW Portland

This information is being sent to all households and businesses that are in the area we believe may have been affected by the detection of bacteria in drinking water.

Our water system recently exceeded the drinking water standard for total coliforms. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, we believe you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation. The language in this notice is required by drinking water regulations. For more information on this issue, please visit www.portlandoregon.gov/water/TCnotice.

The Portland Water Bureau routinely monitors for drinking water contaminants. During September, the Water Bureau took 384 samples to test for the presence of coliform bacteria. Forty-five (12%) of our samples showed the presence of total coliform bacteria. The standard is that no more than 5% of samples per month may do so.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified as soon as possible. Coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves. *Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.*

Usually, coliforms are a sign that there could be a problem with the system's treatment or distribution system (pipes). Whenever we detect coliform bacteria in any sample, we do follow-up testing to see if *Escherichia coli (E. coli)*, an indicator of fecal contamination, is present. **We did not find any *E. coli* in our subsequent testing. If we had, we would have notified you as soon as possible.**

What happened? What was done?

A routine water quality sample collected from SW 27th Avenue and Nevada Court on September 17, 2013, was positive for total coliforms. Follow-up samples collected in the area were also positive for total coliforms. All samples were negative for *E. coli*. Through a thorough investigation, the Portland Water Bureau was unable to identify any sources of contamination or any operational issues in this area. It appears the issue was the result of unusually warm water combined with a decrease in demand. Warm, slow-moving water

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results in decreased disinfectant residuals. A disinfectant residual is the amount of disinfectant left in the system after the water has traveled from the treatment facility. Lower disinfectant residuals can lead to an increase in bacterial activity.

To improve the disinfection residual, the Portland Water Bureau increased the amount of disinfectant added when it treats the water. In addition, we performed high-velocity flushing to remove sediments and organic matter from the pipes in this area. This has further increased the disinfection residual and brought in fresh cool water. Follow-up testing on October 22 did not detect any bacteria. This indicates that these actions were effective in resolving this issue. We will continue to regularly monitor this area, as well as the entire drinking water system.

What should I do?

You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. As always, people with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some older adults may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Services, at (971) 673-0405.

For more information and a map of the affected area, please visit

www.portlandoregon.gov/water/TCnotice

or contact the Portland Water Bureau at 503-823-7525 or 1120 SW 5th Ave, Room 600, Portland, OR 97204.

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 Portland Water Bureau. State Water System ID#: OR4100657.
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