

## DRINKING WATER PROBLEM CORRECTED

Customers of the Fairhaven Water Department were notified on October 6, 2021 of a problem with our drinking water and were advised to boil their water. We are pleased to report that the problem has been corrected and that it is no longer necessary to boil your water. Notification that you no longer need to boil your water was made on October 23, 2021 via RAVE calls, radio, television, town website and social media. As required by Mass DEP, we are following up with this newspaper article. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

Residents/Customers were advised to flush their lines again to remove any contaminated water from their pipes and or fixtures (refrigerator water lines, water tanks, etc.) and any devices with filters should have the filters replaced. Go to the following webpage for detailed information on what to do after the Boil Order is lifted:

[https://www.mass.gov/guides/drinking-water-boil-orders-and-public-health-orders#-what-to-do-after-the-order-is-lifted-](https://www.mass.gov/guides/drinking-water-boil-orders-and-public-health-orders#-what-to-do-after-the-order-is-lifted)

We are providing the following summary of the event for your information.

We collected routine samples on Tuesday, October 5, 2021. We were notified by the lab on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, that twelve distribution samples were *E.coli* positive, Total Coliform TNC. We notified Mass DEP the same day we were notified by the lab of the sample results. We collected repeat samples on Thursday, October 7, 2021, and *E.coli* was still detected throughout Town. This *E. coli* positive repeat sample, following the total coliform positive original sample, constitutes an *E. coli* MCL violation. *E. coli* can make you sick and are especially a concern for people with weakened immune systems. We immediately removed the source from service and isolated it from the treatment system.

In addition, Mattapoisett (treatment plant) is continually chlorinating until directed otherwise by Mass DEP and we will be spot chlorinating and flushing the system. The distribution samples collected on October 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21 and 22 had some that were total coliform positive with *E.coli* absent. On October 15, 21 and 22 samples were total coliform and *E.coli* absent.

Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water source (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or a failure in the water treatment process.

*Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present.*

*E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Human pathogens in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a greater health risk for infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.*

The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice from their healthcare providers about drinking this water.

### **What was done?**

We immediately took the Tinkham Lane Well, which we believed to be the sole cause of this issue, out of service. We then hired a contractor who investigated the well which revealed a breach in the well casing 8 feet below the surface. Further, we subsequently repaired the breach, cleaned the well and sampled and are awaiting the State's permission to place this well back in service.

For more information, please contact Jeff Furtado, Water Superintendent, at 508-979-4032 (Water Dept. office, messages will be retrieved periodically, and we will return calls as soon as possible). General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by bacteria and other disease-causing organisms are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

*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.*

As always, you may contact Jeffrey Furtado, at 508-979-4032 with any comments or questions.

This notice is being sent to you by Fairhaven Water Department, PWS ID#: 4094000.

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