



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
Tests Showed Coliform Bacteria detected in drinking water served by:
Devens MassDevelopment Water System, located in Devens, Massachusetts

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was 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.

We routinely monitor for drinking water contaminants. We took twenty nine (29) samples to test for the presence of coliform bacteria during March. Three (3) of our samples collected on March 15th showed the presence of total coliform bacteria. The standard is that no more than 1 sample per month may do so. This exceeds acceptable standards. Expanded sampling of the system conducted on March 18th confirmed there were no bacteria in any of the repeat samples.

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.

People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly 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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. 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 other bacteria of greater concern, such as fecal coliform or *E. coli*, are present. Of the original three total coliform positive samples one confirmed positive for *E. coli*. **However we did not find any of these bacteria in our subsequent testing. If we had, we would have notified you immediately and the additional testing conducted shows that this problem has been resolved.**

What happened? What was done?

During our second round of routine monthly sampling three samples showed a presence of total coliform bacteria. This presence was not isolated to any one section of the system but was randomly located. An immediate assessment for potential system or sample location concerns, as well as sample collection and lab analysis procedures, was conducted and no deficiency or source of contamination was identified. As a precaution, disinfection levels were increased until repeat sampling could be conducted. The expanded sampling of the system wells, treated water storage tanks, routine and additional system sites was conducted March 18th with no bacteria detected in any repeat samples.

- We have increased sampling for coliform bacteria to catch any concerns as early as possible
- Bacteria samples will be taken directly to the lab for analysis rather than transported with all system samples

We are notifying our customers of the violation by providing this public notice to you as well as submitting a copy of this public notice to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the local board of health. The DEP and water department will evaluate the effectiveness of the steps taken to see if any further action is required

Situation Resolved: These bacteria were not found in our subsequent testing, and show that this problem has been resolved.

For more information, please contact Shawn Meunier at 978-772-4250 or 85 Walker Road, Shirley, MA 01464.

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.