



## SYSTEM NOTICE

STAATSBURG WATER SYSTEM

January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

## Disinfection Byproducts (Trihalomethanes) MCL Exceedance Water Advisory

### Staatsburg Water System Supply ID 1302777

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Your water continues to be acceptable for all uses.

#### Why are you receiving this notice/information?

Quarterly water samples were taken from the Staatsburg Water System public water supply on 3/19/2024, 6/25/2024, 9/23/2024, 12/27/2024 and analyzed for total trihalomethanes.

You are receiving this notice because testing of our public water system found the presence of trihalomethanes (THMs) or disinfection byproducts (DBPs) at concentrations above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 80 parts per billion (ppb) for the public water system. The MCL is set well below levels known or estimated to cause health effects and does not constitute an immediate health hazard.

The standard is not a "bright line" between drinking water concentrations that cause health effects and those that do not, but is set at a water concentration at which exposure is much lower than exposures identified as causing health effects in animals. Thus, exceedance of the standard is not a trigger for health effects, but a trigger for water suppliers to take action to reduce the trihalomethane concentrations and maintain what is already a large margin of protection against health effects. We therefore, do not expect health effects to occur from normal use of the water.

#### What are Trihalomethanes?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards and requires the disinfection of drinking water. Trihalomethanes are a group of chemicals that are formed in drinking water during disinfection when chlorine reacts with naturally organic material (e.g., decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. They are disinfection byproducts and include the individual chemicals chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and chlorodibromomethane. The amount of trihalomethanes formed in drinking water during disinfection can change from day to day, depending on the temperature, the amount of organic material in the water, the amount of chlorine added, and a variety of other factors.

#### What are the health effects of trihalomethanes?

Some studies suggest that people who drank water containing trihalomethanes for long periods of time (e.g., 20 to 30 years) have an increased risk of certain health effects. These include an increased risk for cancer and for low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. The methods used by these studies could not rule out the role of other factors that could have resulted in the observed increased risks. In addition, other similar studies do not show an increased risk for these health effects. Therefore, the evidence from these studies is not strong enough to conclude that trihalomethanes were a major factor contributing to the observed increased risks for these health effects. Studies of laboratory animals show that some trihalomethanes can cause cancer and adverse reproductive and developmental effects, but at exposures much higher than exposures that could result through normal use of the water. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the information from the human and animal studies and concluded that while there is no causal link between disinfection byproducts (including trihalomethanes) and human effects, the balance of the information warranted stronger regulations that limit the amount of trihalomethanes in drinking water,



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while still allowing for adequate disinfection. The risks for adverse health effects from trihalomethanes in drinking water are small compared to the risks for illness from drinking water inadequately disinfected water.

#### Steps Being Taken to Correct the Problem

DCWWA officials will continue to monitor levels quarterly and make appropriate operational adjustments at the Hyde Park Regional Water Treatment Facility, as needed.

#### Additional Measures People Can Take

Some people may wish to take additional practical measures to reduce their exposure. We do not consider these measures necessary to avoid health effects, but they are provided as options for those who may be especially concerned. They could:

- Use bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes.
- Use less water for bathing, showering or house cleaning which will reduce exposure from breathing vapors and through skin contact.
- Ventilate kitchen and bathroom areas (e.g., use exhaust fans or open windows) when using water to reduce the amount of chemicals in the air.

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.

General information about New York State public drinking water is also available at:

[www.health.ny.gov/publicwater](http://www.health.ny.gov/publicwater)

#### For further information, please contact:

Dutchess County Water & Wastewater Authority @ 845.486.3601

Dutchess County Department of Health, Environmental Health Services @ 845-486-3404

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**\*\* Visit our website [www.DCWWA.org](http://www.DCWWA.org) to sign up for our Alerts and Advisories \*\***

# Frequently Asked Questions

## DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS (TRICHALOMETHANES)

### Q1. What are disinfection byproducts and how are they formed?

A1. Most drinking water must be treated with disinfectants to kill or inactivate organisms that naturally exist which may cause illness. This process is called disinfection. Chlorine reacts with minute particles of naturally occurring organic matter dissolved or suspended in the treated water to form compounds known as disinfection byproducts (DBPs). The most common DBPs formed when chlorine is used in the disinfection process are trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs).

### Q2. What types of water systems are most likely to have DBPs?

A2. Water systems using sources with higher amounts of organic substances will form more DBPs when disinfected than those that do not. Sources with higher organics levels include:

- Surface waters, such as lakes, rivers and streams.
- Springs and wells are shallow and/or located near surface waters.

Groundwater, especially those from deep wells, tends to contain little organic substances. Even if they chlorinate the water, lesser amounts of DBPs are typically found.

### Q3. Do DBPs have harmful health effects?

A3. There have been many studies on the health effects of exposure to disinfection byproducts. Although some studies indicate the potential for both short- and long-term adverse health effects, others do not.

Some studies suggest that people who drink chlorinated water, or water with elevated levels of disinfection byproducts for long periods of time, may have an increased risk for certain health effects. For example, some studies of people who drank chlorinated drinking water for 20 or 30 years show that long term exposure to disinfection byproducts is associated with an increased risk for certain types of cancer. A few studies of women who drank water containing disinfection byproducts during pregnancy show an association between exposure to elevated levels of disinfection byproducts and small increased risks for low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. However, in each of the studies, how long and how frequently people actually drank the water, as well as how much disinfection byproducts the water contained is not known for certain. Therefore, we do not know for sure if the observed increases in risk for cancer and other health effects are due to disinfection byproducts or some other factor.

### Q4. Are there regulations regarding DBPs?

A4. Yes, disinfection byproducts are regulated in accordance with the Federal Codes and the NYS Sanitary Code in public drinking water systems. The frequency of monitoring varies depending on the public water system size, source type and type of disinfectant used. Past levels of disinfection byproducts may also result in either an increase or decrease in monitoring. Once the level of disinfection byproducts exceeds the maximum contaminant level allowed by the Federal or NYS Sanitary Code a violation is issued to the public water system. Notification of this exceedance is a required action to a maximum contaminant level exceedance for disinfection byproducts.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS (TRIHALOMETHANES)

#### Q5. What can be done to reduce the amount of DBPs formed?

A5. Sometimes, it is possible to reduce the amount of DBPs formed by one or more of the following methods:

- Removing the organic substances that react with chlorine to produce DBPs.
- Avoid maintaining residuals that are higher than necessary for public health protection.
- Changing the location where the chlorine is added.
- Using a different type of disinfectant. Disinfectants other than chlorine have certain advantages and disadvantages and some form other types of DBPs.

#### Q6. Should chlorination be discontinued to avoid DBPs?

A6. The primary reason for adding chlorine to water is to make it safe to drink by killing or inactivating microorganisms that cause illness and diseases such as typhoid, cholera, dysentery, and giardiasis. Health professionals regard the chlorination of water as one of the most important advances in the field of public health protection. Chlorinating drinking water has saved millions of lives.

Research continues on the health effects of DBPs and improvements in water treatment technology. Because of the immense benefits in reduction of infectious diseases, and the simplicity and low cost of water treatment using chlorine, chlorination is the most appropriate choice as a method of ensuring safe drinking water for most water systems.

#### Q7. I have a health condition, should I be concerned?

A7. Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. People undergoing chemotherapy or living with HIV/AIDS, transplant patients, children and infants, the frail elderly, pregnant women and their fetuses can be particularly at risk for infections in general. If you have special health care needs, consider taking additional precautions with your drinking water, and seek advice from your healthcare provider.

#### Q8. Where can I find out more if I have questions?

A8. To learn more about your drinking water, visit the following websites:

[www.dutchessny.gov](http://www.dutchessny.gov)

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/>

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking>