

NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF THE TOWN OF BRUTUS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Dear Town of Brutus Public Water Supply Customer,

The Town of Brutus Public Water Supply recently violated a drinking water standard set by the New York State Department of Health. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what the Town is doing to address this situation.

The Town of Brutus' public water supply has levels of trihalomethanes above that specified by the New York State Department of Health. The Town is required to sample water for trihalomethanes within the Town's distribution system each quarter of the year, and then average the quarterly sample results obtained within the past twelve months. This value is called the Running Annual Average. The New York State Department of Health has set the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for the Running Annual Average of trihalomethanes at 80 parts per billion. The Town of Brutus' public water system's current Running Annual Average is 91.0 parts per billion or 11.0 parts per billion above the allowable concentration. Water samples are collected at the farthest point in the distribution system where the trihalomethane levels should be the highest and therefore may not be representative of the system as a whole.

We are required by the New York State Department of Health to advise you through this mailing of this situation and to provide you with additional information concerning trihalomethanes. Here are brief answers to some questions you might have:

What should I do?

You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. No immediate action is required or necessary. If you wish to take further precautions, however, you can use bottled water or use individual household filters certified to remove trihalomethanes. You do not have to avoid using the water.

Is It Safe to Drink My Water?

It has yet to be determined whether drinking water above 80 parts per billion is a health danger. However, for more than three decades the Health Department's drinking water standards were set at a much higher level of 100 parts per billion.

Who is affected?

Individuals receiving public water within the Town of Brutus.

Where do trihalomethanes come from?

Trihalomethanes are a group of chemicals that includes chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and chlorodibromomethane. Trihalomethanes are formed in drinking water during treatment by chlorine, which reacts with certain acids that are in naturally-occurring organic material (e.g., decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. The amount of trihalomethanes in drinking water 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. Drinking water is disinfected by public water suppliers to kill bacteria and viruses that could cause serious illnesses. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State. For this reason, disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health.

The Town of Brutus' public water is drawn from Owasco Lake. The water is filtered and then disinfected with chlorine by the City of Auburn before it is delivered to the Cayuga County Water & Sewer Authority who re-chlorinates the water if necessary before it is delivered to the Town of Brutus. If necessary the Town of Brutus adds additional chlorine to the water in order to maintain a minimum chlorine level in the water as required by the New York State Department of Health.

What are the potential health effects?

Some studies suggest that people who drink chlorinated water (which contains trihalomethanes) or water containing elevated levels of trihalomethanes 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 to 30 years show that long term exposure to disinfection by-products (including trihalomethanes) is associated with an increased risk for certain types of cancer. A few studies of women who drank water containing trihalomethanes during pregnancy show an association between exposure to elevated levels of trihalomethanes 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 trihalomethanes 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 trihalomethanes or some other factor. The individual trihalomethanes chloroform, bromodichloromethane and dibromochloromethane cause cancer in laboratory animals exposed to high levels over their lifetimes. Chloroform, bromodichloromethane and dibromochloromethane are also known to cause effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure, primarily on the liver, kidney, nervous system and on their ability to bear healthy offspring. Chemicals that cause adverse health effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure may pose a risk for adverse health effects in humans exposed to lower levels over long periods of time.

What Is the Town of Brutus Doing About It?

- 1) The Town is increasing the frequency of flushing their water mains. Research has shown that the potential for the formation of trihalomethanes is greatest the longer chlorine remains in contact with the organic matter in the water. Flushing reduces this "contact time" which reduces trihalomethane formation.

Consumers having questions on any of the above can contact the Town of Brutus at (315) 834-9398, or the Cayuga County Health Department at (315) 253-1405.

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 and businesses) by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

The Town of Brutus