

PUBLIC NOTICE
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
The Village of Tupper Lake Has Levels of Haloacetic Acids (HAA5s) Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system has violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our consumers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation. We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results from 2023 show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for Haloacetic Acids (HAA5s) at the NYS DEC Boat Launch sampling location and at the Village Office site during the 4th quarter of 2023. The MCL for HAA5s is 60 parts per billion (ppb). Our compliance is determined by averaging the 4 most recent samples collected on a quarterly basis at the sampling stations and determining the locational running annual average (LRAA). The HAA5 LRAA calculated for the 4th quarter of 2023 at the Boat Launch site was 102.1 ppb and 65.8 ppb at the Village Office site.

What are Haloacetic Acids (HAAs)?

HAAs are formed in drinking water during treatment by chlorine (the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State), 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 HAAs 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. For this reason, disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health.

Some studies suggest that people who drank chlorinated drinking water containing disinfection by-products (possibly including HAAs) for long periods of time (e.g., 20 to 30 years) have an increased risk for certain health effects. These include an increased risk for cancer. However, how long and how frequently people actually drank the water as well as how much HAAs the water contained is not known for certain. Therefore, the evidence from these studies is not strong enough to conclude that the observed increased risk for cancer is due to HAAs, other disinfection by-products, or some other factor. Studies of laboratory animals show that the individual HAAs, dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid, can cause cancer following exposure to high levels over their lifetimes. Dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid are also known to cause other effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure, primarily on the liver, kidney, and nervous system and on their ability to bear healthy offspring. The effects reported in studies of laboratory animals occur at exposures much higher than exposures that could result through normal use of the water. The risks for adverse health effects from HAAs in drinking water are small compared to the risk for illness from drinking inadequately disinfected water.

What does this mean for you?

At present, the water is suitable to drink, cook with, and bath in. 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. These include using bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes or using water pitchers containing an activated carbon filter or a tap-mounted activated carbon filter. These filters are readily available in many grocery and home improvement stores. Ventilating bathroom areas (e.g., using exhaust fans or opening windows) when showering or bathing can also help reduce exposures from chemicals released into the air.

What happened? What is being done?

One of the water sources for the Village of Tupper Lake is Little Simond Pond. The water is treated with a Diatomaceous Earth filtration plant that does not significantly remove Total Organic Carbon. When the chlorine disinfectant is added to the water, disinfection byproducts can be formed, including Haloacetic Acids, due to high Total Organic Carbon concentrations. The Village is currently working to replace the Little Simond Pond Filter Plant with a new filter plant which will incorporate newer filtration technologies that will significantly remove Total Organic Carbon from the source water and therefore significantly decrease the formation potential of disinfection byproducts. The new filter plant is in the planning stages and work is still progressing on Pilot Study data collection. The new filter plant project will soon be moving into the design stage, and it is anticipated that the design will be complete in the Summer of 2024. Once design is complete and approvals are obtained, the project will be put out to bid and then construction will commence. For more information, please contact the Village Office at 359-3341. The new filter plant will also address and eliminate the high iron concentrations in our water.

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, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.