

DRINKING WATER WARNING

***E. coli* was! In the Onset Fire District Water Department's water**

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

Total coliform bacteria were found in six distribution samples and one of those samples contained *E. coli* bacteria for samples collected from the water system on May 7, 2019. We were notified by the lab of the results on May 8, 2019 and we notified the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Southeast Regional Office as required. We collected repeat samples on May 9, 2019, as required. On May 10, 2019 we were notified by the lab that nine out of eighteen repeat samples collected on May 9, 2019 were positive for total coliform and absent for *E. Coli*. The *E. Coli* positive distribution sample followed by the total coliform positive repeat sample constitutes an *E. Coli* MCL violation. *E. Coli* bacteria can make you sick, and are especially a concern for people with weakened immune systems.

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.

What should I do? What does this mean?

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one minute and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water. Discard any ice, beverages, formula, and uncooked foods that were prepared with water from the public water system on or after May 7, 2019.
- **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.**
- *Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present.*
- 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 is being done?

We began temporary chlorination on May 8, 2019. We will continue to provide temporary chlorination until this situation is resolved. We have been flushing in the areas where the detections occurred and will continue as needed. We will be collecting system wide distribution samples on Monday and Tuesday of next week. We will inform you when tests show no bacteria are present and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem by Friday, May 17, 2019. We will be conducting a RTRC Level 2 Assessment as required to further investigate the cause of the contamination.

For more information, please contact the Onset Fire District Water Dept. at 508-295-0605. 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.

This notice is being sent to you by Onset Fire District Water Dept. PWS ID#: 4310003.

Date distributed: May 10, 2019.