



Treatment successful, source tests clean

August 15, 2005--Routine water sampling last week revealed the presence of low counts of total coliform bacteria at the town's Newtown Hill water tank, prompting the water department to chlorinate the source to eliminate the bacteria. None of the several samples taken from the tank throughout the week ever confirmed as E. coli or fecal bacteria, and since the treatment, all samples have tested negative for bacteria.

The Newtown Hill tank – which was locked off from the system during treatment – has now returned to service following several days of sampling that detected no contamination, according to General Manager Savas Danos.

Danos said that the contamination never posed a public health threat, since the tank was taken offline upon discovery of the bacteria, effectively isolating them from the system. 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. Once tests showed that the chlorination had eradicated the bacteria, the water tank could be safely brought back online.

Danos advises customers in the area of Newtown Hill that they may be able to detect a slight odor or taste of chlorine in the drinking water for the next several days. Although it may not be appealing, the water is perfectly safe to drink, he added.

As for the reason for the contamination, Danos explained that residual bacteria can sometimes “re-grow” during periods of low use and warm temperatures – much like the conditions of the last few weeks. A low-level seasonal chlorination treatment is often used to keep the bacteria at bay, a strategy the department has used in the past to keep the bacteria at bay.

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.