

### **Why am I receiving this postcard from the City of Fargo?**

A routine monthly drinking water sample collected on December 11, 2017 at the Fargo Water Treatment Plant (FWTP) found that the sample was not in conformance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s standard average of 0.010 milligrams per liter for bromate concentration. The sample concentration in December 2017 at the FWTP was 0.088 milligrams per liter. This notice is being mailed to residents in Fargo, West Fargo and the Cass Rural Water District to assure the public the issue has been corrected and was attributed to a mechanical failure with monitoring equipment in the ozone process, along with using the Sheyenne River as a water source.

### **How does bromate form?**

Bromate forms when ozone used to disinfect drinking water reacts with naturally occurring bromide found in source water. Bromide concentrations are typically higher in Sheyenne River water than Red River water.

### **How did this occur?**

In a review of data from the water samples, there was a nine-day period, December 7-15, in which bromate concentrations may have been at levels to increase the standard average calculation above the EPA standard. During this time, Sheyenne River water was being used in the plant and clogs in the ozone analyzer sample lines resulted in incorrectly low ozone readings.

### **What is being put in place to remedy the issue?**

Additional computer control features are being implemented to provide improved diagnostic information for the ozone infusion process. Usage of water from the Sheyenne River ceased on December 15 and the bromate concentrations, correspondingly, reduced dramatically. Relying mostly on the Red River, the Sheyenne River has been used sparingly since early-January and also water samples for bromate analysis have been collected daily. Samples analyzed at FWTP show bromate levels around 0.001 milligrams per liter, or about 10% of the EPA standard. Official compliance sampling is conducted monthly and sent to a private lab in California.

### **Will the technology being installed as part of FWTP expansion help with this?**

One of the primary objectives for expanding the FWTP was being able to fully comply with bromate regulations. The existing plant would unlikely be able to meet the EPA standards if long-term usage and treatment of Sheyenne River water were required. The expansion to the FWTP is expected to be complete and operational in mid-2018.

### **Have there been previous issues with bromate in our drinking water?**

There have been no previous compliance issues at the FWTP for bromate since the EPA standard was implemented in 2002.

### **How concerned should I be about this issue?**

In consultation with Dr. John Baird, Health Officer for Fargo Cass Public Health, he offered the following opinion. "A limit is set for the level of bromate in drinking water because of a concern that some people exposed to high levels over many years may have an increased risk of cancer. I see no health risk to our community from the short time that bromate levels were over the established limit."

The following paragraphs are being provided to all Fargo Water Treatment Plant consumers to fulfill a requirement of the North Dakota Department of Health. Please know that the City of Fargo has implemented new safeguards in response to this issue.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

*City of Fargo has levels of bromate above drinking water standard*

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation. Please share this information with all 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.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results from January 2018 to March 2018 show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL) for bromate. It is determined by averaging all samples collected by our system for the last 12 months. The MCL for bromate is 0.010 milligrams per liter. The City of Fargo has a running annual average (RAA) of 0.011 milligrams per liter at site 101 (high service pump station).

### **What should I do?**

There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to use an alternative water supply (e.g. bottled). You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.

If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

### **What does this mean?**

Some people who drink water containing bromate in excess of the MCL *over many years* may have an increased risk of getting cancer. This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours.

### **What happened? What is being done?**

Bromate forms when ozone used to disinfect drinking water reacts with naturally occurring bromide found in source water. A mechanical failure with monitoring equipment in the ozone process occurred in December 2017, along with using the Sheyenne River as a water source. Ozone analyzers are being checked daily, along with daily samples being collected to be analyzed for bromate. The Sheyenne River will be used sparingly as a raw water source until new technology in the water plant is operational.

**For more information, contact the City of Fargo's Water Treatment Plant at 701.241.1469.**

Date of notice: April 2018



**WATER TREATMENT PLANT**

**The City of Fargo  
435 14th Avenue South  
Fargo, ND 58103**

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 3  
FARGO, ND

*Our Strong Commitment To You...*

Fargo will continue providing high quality drinking water to the metro's residents, while implementing even more robust monitoring.

