

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 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. The Red River is the only source of water being used at the plant at this time, and recent samples analyzed at FWTP show bromate levels around 0.001 milligrams per liter, or about 10% of the EPA standard maximum. Official sampling for compliance 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, with its equipment 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 is committed to supplying the highest quality of water to the metro area and its residents, and has implemented new safeguards in response to this issue.

Our water system recently violated one drinking water standard. Although this 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 many not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, school 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 we conducted on December 11, 2017 for the month of December 2017 show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL) for bromate. The standard for bromate is 0.010 mg/L. The City of Fargo has a running annual average (RAA) of 0.012 mg/L at site 101 (high service pump station).

What should I do?

You do not need to use an alternative water supply (e.g. bottled).

However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

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.

What happened? What is being done?

A mechanical failure with monitoring equipment in the ozone process occurred, 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, you are encouraged to feel free to contact the City of Fargo's Water Treatment Plant at 701.241.1469.

Date of notice: January 2018



WATER TREATMENT PLANT
The City of Fargo
435 14th Avenue South
Fargo, ND 58103

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Our Strong Commitment To You...

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

