

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**  
**The Willsboro WD 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 and 2024 show that our system exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for Haloacetic Acids (HAA5s) at the High School Sampling site during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2024. 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 and determining the locational running annual average (LRAA). The HAA5 LRAA calculated for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024 at the High School sampling site was 62.8 ppb. The HAA5 LRAA calculated for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024 at the High School sampling site was 60.3 ppb. Based on the most recent 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter sampling, our water system is now in compliance with all state regulations and the HAA5 LRAA concentration is now below the MCL value of 60 ppb.

**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?**

Our current water filtration plant is old and uses Diatomaceous Earth filters, an older filtration technology which does not significantly reduce total organic carbon in the source water. When the chlorine disinfectant is added to this water that still contains high levels of total organic carbon, disinfection byproducts such as Haloacetic Acids can be formed. The Willsboro WD has received grant funding to upgrade our filter plant with a newer technology filter plant that will significantly remove Total Organic Carbon from the source water and therefore significantly decrease the formation potential of disinfection byproducts. Design of the new filter plant is underway and construction should begin on the plant in 2025.

*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.*

This Notice is being sent to you by the Willsboro Water District.

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