



## *City of East Providence*

Department of Public Works  
Water Utilities Division  
60 Commercial Way  
East Providence RI 02914-1006

The City of East Providence was recently required to provide its water customers with a notification regarding a violation of the Disinfection Byproduct drinking water standard. The Water Utilities Division has put together this page to help answer some questions that customers may have regarding this issue.

### **1. What are Disinfection Byproducts?**

The City of East Providence purchases all of its water from Providence Water whose source is the Scituate Reservoir. Chlorine is added at the Providence Water Treatment Facility to kill bacteria and pathogens. Chlorine disinfection of drinking water is one of the major public health advances in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century eliminating typhoid and cholera epidemics, which were common in American cities 100 years ago. However, it has been found that disinfectants, like chlorine, react with naturally-occurring materials in the water to form disinfection byproducts (DBPs), which may pose health risks to some people if ingested over a long period of time. The specific DBP which the East Providence water system is in violation for is Total Trihalomethane (TTHM).

### **2. What are the health risks associated with DBPs?**

The EPA has determined that long-term exposure to DBPs may result in adverse health effects. When a public water system exceeds the standard, it is required to provide a public notice to its customers. The notification is not intended to suggest that you will be harmed by the detected levels, but rather keep you informed.

When the EPA set a regulatory standard for a compound that is suspected to cause adverse health effects from long-term exposures, it assumes that the people who drink that water consume two liters (about ½ gallon) of it every day for seventy years.

If you have concerns about long term health risks associated with DBPs, please consult with your personal physician.

### **3. Is the Water safe to drink?**

Yes. As noted above, the health risks associated with TTHMS is long term exposure at high levels of TTHMS over a long period of time.

### **4. Is this violation unique to East Providence?**

No. Many water systems in Rhode Island and throughout the country are struggling to meet the EPA rule and maintain the balance between chlorine disinfection and disinfection byproduct formation.

### **5. What is being done to address this issue?**

The Water Utilities Division is taking this issue very seriously. We have been working with an engineering consultant to develop an aeration system to be installed within the six-million gallon water storage tank. At this time, the system is estimated to be in operation by October 2018. We have met with the Rhode Island Department of Health, and they agree with the City's plan and timeframe to address this issue. Until such time an aeration system is installed which is designed to reduce DBPs in the water, we anticipate that there may be additional violations of this nature.

If you have additional questions, please contact the East Providence Water Utilities Division at 401-435-7741.