

**Central Bridge Water District**  
P.O. Box 122, Central Bridge, NY 12035-0122  
518-868-2158  
June 2010

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

### **Central Bridge Water District Has Levels of Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) Above Drinking Water Standards**

Our water system has recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor your drinking water for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Test results of samples collected in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 confirmed that our system exceeds the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for haloacetic acids. The standard for haloacetic acids is that the average of quarterly samples taken over the last year may not exceed 60 micrograms per liter (ug/L or parts per billion). The running annual average for the second quarter 2010 was 109.225 ug/L.

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

Haloacetic acids are a group of chemicals that includes mono-, di- and trichloroacetic acids and mono- and dibromoacetic acids. Haloacetic acids are formed in drinking water during treatment by chlorine, which reacts with certain acids that are naturally-occurring organic matter (for example, decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae, or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. The amount of haloacetic acids 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. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State. For this reason, disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health.

Some studies suggest that people who drink chlorinated water for 20 to 30 years show that long term exposure to disinfection by-products (possibly including haloacetic acids) is associated with an increased risk for certain types of cancer. However, how long and how frequently people actually drank the water, as well as how much haloacetic acids the water contained is not known for certain. Therefore, we do not know for sure if the observed increased risks for cancer and other health effects are due to haloacetic acids, other disinfection by-products, or some other factor. The individual haloacetic acids, dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid cause cancer in laboratory animals exposed to high levels over their lifetimes. Dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid are also known to cause effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure, primarily on the liver, kidney, nervous system and on their ability to bear healthy offspring. Chemicals that cause effects in animals after high levels of exposure may pose a risk to humans exposed to similar or lower levels over long periods of time.

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

This is not immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. If you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. You may wish to use bottled water certified for use in New York State to cook and drink until the problem is resolved.

#### **Steps We Are Taking**

We have engaged the services of a licensed professional engineer McDonald Engineering, P.C., to develop a long-term treatment to adequately remove excess haloacetic acids and trihalomethanes in the water. The District has committed to having plans for treatment to the health department by November 2010.

## **Central Bridge Water District Has Levels of Total Trihalomethanes Above Drinking Water Standards**

Our water system has recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor your drinking water for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results conducted in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 confirmed that our system exceeds the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for total trihalomethanes. The running annual average in total trihalomethane samples taken during the last year was 129.25ug/L. The standard for total trihalomethanes is that the average of quarterly samples taken over the last year may not exceed 80 micrograms per liter (ug/L or parts per billion).

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

Trihalomethanes are a group of chemicals that includes chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and chlorodibromomethane. Trihalomethanes are formed in drinking water during treatment by chlorine, which reacts with certain acids that are in naturally-occurring organic material (for example, decomposing vegetation such as tree leaves, algae or other aquatic plants) in surface water sources such as rivers and lakes. The amount of trihalomethanes 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. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant in New York State. For this reason, disinfection of drinking water by chlorination is beneficial to public health.

Some studies suggest that people who drink chlorinated water (which contains trihalomethanes) or water containing elevated levels of trihalomethanes for long periods of time may have an increased risk for certain health effects. For example, some studies of people who drank chlorinated drinking water for 20 to 30 years show that long term exposure to disinfection by-products (including trihalomethanes) is associated with an increased risk for certain types of cancer. A few studies of women who drank water containing trihalomethanes during pregnancy show an association between exposure to elevated levels of trihalomethanes and small increased risks for low birth weights, miscarriages and birth defects. However, in each of the studies, how long and how frequently people actually drank the water, as well as how much trihalomethanes the water contained is not known for certain. Therefore, we do not know for sure if the observed increased risks for cancer and other health effects are due to trihalomethanes or some other factor. The individual trihalomethanes chloroform, bromodichloromethane, and dibromochloromethane cause cancer in laboratory animals exposed to high levels over their lifetimes. Chloroform, bromodichloromethane and dibromochloromethane are also known to cause effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure, primarily on the liver, kidney, nervous system and on their ability to bear healthy offspring. Chemicals that cause adverse health effects in laboratory animals after high levels of exposure may pose a risk for adverse health effects in humans exposed to lower levels over long periods of time.

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

This is not immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. If you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. You may wish to use bottled water certified for use in New York State to cook and drink until the problem is resolved.

### **Steps We Are Taking**

We have engaged the services of a licensed professional engineer McDonald

Engineering, P.C., to develop a long-term treatment to adequately remove excess haloacetic acids and trihalomethanes in the water. The District has committed to having plans for treatment to the health department by November 2010.

For more information, please contact the Central Bridge Water District at 518-868-4852 or attend the District meeting the first Thursday of each month at the Methodist Church on Church Street, Central Bridge, at 7:30 PM.

For more information on the contaminants and standards you may also call the EPA's Safe Drinking water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791, the EPA's Safewater Website [www.epa.gov/safewater/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/) or the Schoharie County Department of Health at 518-295-8382, 276 Main Street, Schoharie.

*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.*