



City of Benton Harbor
200 East Wall Street
Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022

The Benton Harbor Water Treatment Plant Announcement
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
The Benton Harbor Water Plant Did Not Meet Treatment Requirements June 16, 2011

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation.

What happened!

The Afternoon of June 16, 2011 filtered water turbidity measurements were taken and the results were 1.6 and 1.8 NTU. These measurements are above the limit set in the Safe Drinking Water Act, PA399, 1976 and amended in 1996. The Act states "No filtered water turbidity sample greater than 1 NTU".

The Benton Harbor Water Plant routinely monitors your water for turbidity. Turbidity is a measurement of how cloudy the water appears. This turbidity measurement tells us whether we are effectively filtering the water supply. Turbidity is not a measurement of any particular organism, but a measurement of particles in the water that may harbor organism or interrupt proper disinfection. Our operators measure the turbidity on the North filter line and the South filter line 12 times each, filter line every day. Normal filtered water turbidity levels at our plant average between 0.05 to 0.25 turbidity units. A water sample taken on June 16, 2011 at 4:00 pm showed levels of 1.6 turbidity Units on the North line and 1.8 turbidity units on the South line. These 2 measurements were above the standard of 1 turbidity units at any filtered water line. Because of these high levels of turbidity, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

What should I do?

You do not need to boil your water or take other actions. We do not know of any contamination, and none of our testing has shown disease-causing organisms in the drinking water.

People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.



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What does this mean?

Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. These symptoms are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

What happened? What was done?

A problem occurred with the treatment system at the water plant. The water tests taken at 4:00 pm were out of the ordinary and none of the on-line monitoring devices indicated any kind of problem. The sample was likely contaminated with construction dust or the high readings were a result of a laboratory error. As a precaution the operator removed all filters from service and washed each carefully before returning them to service. All of the testing before and after the 4:00 pm time frame were well within the normal filtered water turbidity levels of 0.05 to 0.25 turbidity units. There was no indication of a failure in any of the filters functions.

For more information, please contact Michael O'Malley at 927-8471 or e-mail at momalley@bhcity.org or mail to 200 East Wall St., Benton Harbor, MI. 49022.

This notice has been sent to every possible address in the Benton Harbor area by direct mail. 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