



TOWN OF NORTON
WATER / SEWER DEPARTMENT
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Update on Town of Norton Drinking Water – November 9, 2017

On November 7, 2017, MassDEP and EPA Region I met with representatives from the Town of Norton including the Town Manager and Water Department. The meeting was part of ongoing efforts to address discolored water in Norton and related potential health concerns. Norton has been conducting their semiannual hydrant flushing as part of their on-going maintenance and efforts to manage manganese and iron in their water system. Given the historic Town water discoloration over the years, the Town has been in the process of siting, constructing and operating a Water Treatment Facility, with groundbreaking anticipated in the Spring of 2018. This filtration plant will serve to treat manganese and iron, which have been identified in past Consumer Confidence Reports. The November 7, 2017 meeting included focused discussion on possible approaches to improve water quality during completion of hydrant system flushing (10 days to two weeks for completion), as well immediate response actions to be taken between now and treatment plant completion in 2019. Below please find a summary of meeting outcomes and recommended actions:

- 1) Immediately expand efforts to communicate directly with customers prior to flushing, including door-to-door advance notice with water use guidance and a Frequently Asked Questions document (FAQ) to guide customers in order to lessen impacts during flushing. An updated flyer was developed and distributed. Norton will evaluate utilizing reverse 911 calls in the future.
- 2) Gather additional information on system operations and Best Management Practices (BMPs) seeking opportunities to improve water quality. Norton's consultants have completed an improved, unidirectional flushing program plan, which will be implemented during the Spring, 2018 flushing. MassDEP and the Town of Norton will perform an updated, on-site, system evaluation during the week of November 13th.
- 3) Norton will investigate availability and cost of temporary water filtration, including options for treatment at both groundwater source wells and individual users.
- 4) Norton will release bids to construct the new treatment plant this Fall, with the intention of breaking ground in Spring of 2018. Norton believes the plant can be completed in 15-16 months. MassDEP has already approved plant construction.
- 5) Norton will begin constructing a filtered drinking water unit this Fall to provide a location where residents can receive water free-of-charge should they have concerns using the water at their residence. MassDEP is providing technical assistance for this project.
- 6) Norton will contact surrounding towns to investigate the possibility of importing water until the treatment plant is completed. MassDEP has provided Norton with initial evaluations to assist in the feasibility analysis.

- 7) Norton is working with MassDEP to increase the authorized water withdrawal from their Replacement Well #3, which has very low levels of Manganese.
- 8) Norton will investigate the possibility of enhancing its ongoing water pipe replacement program that has already replaced approximately 25% of the Town's water pipes.

Norton's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), which is direct mailed to all water system users annually, provides Manganese information, along with usage and health risk minimization guidance. The CCR also summarizes the range of Manganese present in Norton's drinking water, including the fact that in 2016 MassDEP's Guidance Level and EPA's Health Advisory was exceeded. Norton relies on five separate groundwater wells to provide town water. Two of the five wells exceed the MassDEP and EPA health advisory level of 0.30 mg/l. The specific language in the CCR pertaining to manganese is as follows:

“Manganese is a naturally occurring mineral found in rocks, soil and groundwater, and surface water. Manganese is necessary for proper nutrition and is part of a healthy diet, but can have undesirable effects on certain sensitive populations at elevated concentrations. The U.S. EPA and MassDEP have set an aesthetics-based Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) for manganese of 50 µg/L (micrograms per liter), or 50 ppb (parts per billion). In addition, MassDEP's Office of Research and Standards (ORS) has set a drinking water guideline for manganese (ORSG), which closely follows the U.S. EPA public health advisory for manganese. Drinking water may naturally have manganese and, when concentrations are greater than 50 ppb, the water may be discolored and taste bad. Over a lifetime, the U.S. EPA recommends that people drink water with manganese levels less than 300 ppb and over the short term, U.S. EPA recommends that people limit their consumption of water with levels over 1000 ppb, primarily due to concerns about possible neurological effects. Children up to 1 year of age should not be given water with manganese concentrations over 300 ppb, nor should formula for infants be made with that water for longer than 10 days. The ORSG differs from the U.S. EPA's health advisory because it expands the age group to which a lower manganese concentration applies from children less than 6 months of age to children up to 1 year of age to address concerns about children's susceptibility to manganese toxicity.”

A link to Norton's CCR is provided below:

<http://www.gemgrp.com/eReports/CNMA000151Y17.pdf>

The Town will provide regular updates on the actions outlined above to MassDEP and EPA, and will post updates on the Town's website. For additional information, please contact Bernie Marshall at 508-285-0280.