



City of Ketchikan, Alaska

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Ketchikan Public Utilities Failed to Meet the Conditions of Filtration Avoidance Criteria

Our water system recently violated one of the conditions of our filtration avoidance criteria. In order to meet the raw source water quality conditions of the filtration avoidance criteria, the fecal coliform concentrations must be equal to or less than 20/100 milliliters (ml) in at least 90 percent of the measurements made for the 6 previous months. In October and November 2019, the rolling 6-month average of fecal coliform results in the raw source water was 89% and 88%, respectively. **The treated water being delivered to all customers meets or exceeds all regulatory drinking water standards for safety.**

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do. The treated water being delivered to all customers meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements for safety. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. This notice is being provided to keep our customers advised of all water quality issues.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been an emergency, you would have been notified within 24 hours.

Ketchikan Public Utilities operates under the filtration avoidance criteria listed in 40 CFR 141.71. As part of this criteria, we are required to sample our raw source water every week for fecal coliform bacteria. The fecal coliform concentrations must be equal to or less than 20/100 milliliters (ml) in at least 90 percent of the measurements made for the 6 previous months. In October 2019, 89% of the samples met the allowable limit. In November 2019, 88% of the samples met the allowable limit. We believe this was due to drought conditions and increased animal activity in our watershed. KPU employs chlorine disinfection, UV disinfection and chloramine disinfection to treat our drinking water. **The treated water has met all regulatory standards for drinking water safety at all times.**

What is being done?

We are continuing to collect all required raw water samples and no further action is required at this time. In November the monthly levels of fecal coliform in the raw source water decreased and since December we are meeting the 90% standard of 20/100 ml. **We will continue to monitor the raw source water as required and ensure that treated water being distributed to our customers meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements for safety.**

For more information, please contact John Kleinegger, Water Division Manager at (907) 228-2442 or johnk@ktn-ak.us. You can also visit our web site at www.ktn-ak.us/water.

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City of Ketchikan, Alaska

DRINKING WATER FILTRATION AVOIDANCE CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND FACT SHEET

March 2020

Ketchikan Public Utilities (KPU) is committed to providing high-quality, reliable, and affordable potable water to our community. Your water comes from two uninhabited watersheds in the mountains above Ketchikan: Ketchikan Lakes and Granite Basin. Thanks to the high-quality water that comes from these protected watersheds and KPU's robust water treatment system, KPU is not required to filter the water. KPU delivers water to the City of Ketchikan using a triple disinfection process. The treatment process consists of disinfection with ultraviolet light and chlorine, and then development of monochloramine to maintain a disinfection residual in the water all the way to your tap.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires regular monitoring of source and treated water quality for all unfiltered water systems.

The treated water we deliver to our customers has met all regulatory standards for drinking water safety at all times.

In October and November 2019, the raw source water quality samples, prior to treatment, exceeded the US EPA's allowable level of coliform bacteria for unfiltered water. During this time, KPU's existing drinking water treatment system continued to deliver treated water that met or exceeded water standards for safety.

Public notice of the violation is a regulatory requirement enforced by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) when raw source water quality does not meet criteria for Filtration Avoidance. This fact sheet answers the most common questions you may have about the public notice.

Why am I receiving this notice?

Although treated water quality continues to meet all drinking water standards, this notice is a regulatory requirement by the US EPA and enforced by ADEC when raw source water quality exceeds allowable levels of bacteria under Filtration Avoidance regulations. During regular monitoring, October and November 2019 raw source water samples from our natural water sources exceeded the allowable bacteria count. As of December 2019, KPU's raw source water has returned to full compliance with all Filtration Avoidance requirements. The treated water that is delivered to our customers has and continues to show no coliform bacteria detection.

Is my water safe to drink?

The samples with exceedances of allowable bacteria are from our natural raw water sources prior to the triple disinfection treatment process. Since the exceedance was only on the raw water tested prior to disinfection treatment, and treated water samples showed no indication of contamination, boiling water is not required. KPU, the State of Alaska, and the US EPA do not recommend any changes to customer water use.

Why wasn't I informed sooner?

The State of Alaska requires that KPU issue public notification within 24 hours for any event that poses a significant health risk to our community. Because this exceedance does not constitute a significant health risk, immediate notification was not required.

Why is Ketchikan's water not filtered?

In 1985 and 2005, KPU considered adding filtration to the treatment process in response to more stringent drinking water regulations developed by the US EPA and adopted by the State of Alaska. Filtration was determined to be an unnecessary expense because during the time of the regulatory changes, the source water

quality continued to be good, and a multi-step disinfection process was determined to be the most cost-effective way to meet all drinking water treatment requirements for our customers.

A 2018 analysis determined a new filtration facility would cost many millions of dollars to construct and operate. If implemented, the resulting impact to our community would be more than a 100% water rate increase to KPU's customers. We continue to support the triple disinfection treatment process as the most cost-effective treatment method for providing safe, potable water to our customers.

What is KPU doing about water quality?

KPU continues to monitor raw source water and its treated water quality for bacteria levels based on unfiltered water regulatory requirements.

KPU is working with the State of Alaska and the US EPA and has requested a Limited Alternative to Filtration (LAF) as allowed by the Safe Drinking Water Act. This compliance approach is allowed for water systems like Ketchikan with uninhabited, undeveloped, and access-controlled watersheds, as long as the level of treatment provided is of higher quality than would be provided by a filtered system alone.

Is it common for water systems to provide unfiltered drinking water?

There are currently four other unfiltered water systems in Alaska including Sitka, Kodiak, Cordova, and Unalaska that provide disinfected water that meets all regulatory requirements for their customers.

There are also several large utilities in the United States that provide unfiltered water that is treated including New York City, San Francisco and Seattle. In fact, approximately two-thirds of Seattle's water is provided from a water source that is unfiltered and operates under the Limited Alternative to Filtration regulatory provision described above.

What is most important to KPU?

Every KPU Water Division employee goes to work each day committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable water to every customer. In the water utility business, there is nothing more important the safety of our customers.

Additional questions?

Contact the KPU Water Division at (907)228-2442.



The Ketchikan Lakes Watershed and Dam