

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

**SYSTEM NAME: Cottonwood Municipal Water PWS # 13-025**

**Well Site 8/9**

## **The Level of Arsenic Exceeded the Drinking Water Standards**

The level of arsenic in wellsite 8/9 in the Cottonwood Municipal Water System PWS#13-025 recently exceeded the drinking water standard. The level of exceedance is not considered to be an emergency, but as our customer it is important that you are aware of the situation, what you should do if anything and what steps have been taken to correct the problem. The city currently samples quarterly for the presence of arsenic in drinking water as required by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). The current standard for arsenic in drinking water is 10 parts billion (ppb), which was formerly 50 ppb prior to 2006. The level of arsenic in the sample collected and analyzed in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2019 was 10.2 ppb. Because the level of arsenic in the initial sample exceeded the 10 ppb standard, a second sample was collected and analyzed to confirm the initial sample and the level of arsenic in the second sample was 12 ppb. The average of these two samples was 11 ppb, which is above the maximum contaminant level (MCL). In addition to taking the quarterly samples, we calculate the running annual average of the four previously collected quarterly samples as required by ADEQ. The running average annual level of arsenic for the last three quarters of 2018 and first quarter of 2019 was 8.3 ppb, which is below the 10 ppb standard for drinking water.

### **What should you do?**

**You DO NOT need to do anything at this time and you do not need to use an alternative (e.g. bottled) water supply.** There is no immediate health risk. If there was an immediate health risk, you would have been notified immediately and instructed on what steps to take in order to prevent any serious health risks from occurring. It has been reported that some people drinking water with arsenic levels in excess of the current standard of 10 ppb for many years may experience skin irritations, circulatory problems and an increased risk of cancer. If you should have specific health concerns, it is recommended you consult your personal physician.

### **What steps have been taken to correct the situation?**

This wellsite's arsenic treatment system has two treatment trains labeled "A" and "B," that operate independently of one another. The treatment trains are switched every 15 days. The recent quarterly sample that exceeded the 10 ppb arsenic standard was collected from water that was treated with the B train. In response to the elevated level of arsenic, the city immediately switched to the A train and collected and analyzed field samples on two separate field testing units, which measured 6.9 and 5 ppb respectively. The city is investigating why the B train has recently been less efficient at removing arsenic and has made a change to the treatment process by lowering the backwash initiation cycle from 150,000 to 135,000 gallons, which should immediately address the issue with the B train. The city also identified a problem with the automatic control valve in the B train that regulates the flow of water during the backwash cycle and has ordered the necessary parts for rebuilding the valve. A malfunctioning valve can cause an inefficient backwash cycle to occur, which can potentially reduce the efficiency of the treatment system for removing arsenic. The city has contacted the manufacturer of the arsenic unit and the company that installed the media to clarify the optimum flow rate required to achieve an effective backwash cycle. Once the valve has been rebuilt, the city will set the valve to the manufacturer's recommended specifications. The city will be closely monitoring the quality of your water by collecting multiple field samples and testing them with our in-house arsenic testing equipment as well as sending split samples to an independent laboratory. Comparing the results of samples tested by an independent laboratory with our in-house arsenic testing equipment will also help identify any potential issues there may be with our in-house testing method/equipment.

The city will also continue to test this site quarterly as required and you will continue to receive these notifications until the running annual average is consistently below the 10 ppb standard.

For more information, please contact Roger Biggs at (928) 634-0186 ext. 3307 or via email at [rbiggs@cottonwoodaz.gov](mailto:rbiggs@cottonwoodaz.gov)

*\*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.*

This notice is being sent to you by Cottonwood Municipal Water CW1  
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