

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Gretna/Gretna Waterworks on a monthly basis collects water samples throughout the city at designated sampling sites to be tested for many different water quality parameters as directed by law. One in particular is the sampling for the possibility of bacteriological contaminants. **Currently our water system is in full compliance with that rule and the water is safe to drink.**

Each month the Gretna Waterworks collects a minimum of 20 bacteriological samples for the presence or absence of coliform bacteria. Coliform bacteria is one of the most common & abundant types of bacteria in the environment and is not harmful to human health, but is easy to test for. If a water sample tests positive for coliform bacteria, it means that there is a potential for other types of bacteria to also be present. Further testing of that sample would be done to investigate if the presence of harmful bacteria exists. From time to time a positive sample can be found due to the extreme nature of the sampling protocols and other factors that could produce a false positive.

Under the Total Coliform Rule, 95% of the routine samples collected must be negative for coliform bacteria. Samples that are positive for coliform bacteria require further testing and additional retake samples. If more than 5% are positive, the water system can be found to be in non-compliance. If there are no harmful contaminants found in any of those retake samples, the non-compliance still may require public notification on a non-emergency basis. If public notification is required, there is a set mandatory language that must be communicated regardless of the non-emergency situation.

Test showed Coliform Bacteria in Gretna Waterworks

- Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Even though this was **not an emergency**, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct the situation.

We routinely monitor your drinking water for contaminants.

- During the reporting period of August 1, 2015 through August 31, 2015 the Gretna Waterworks violated the maximum contaminant level of coliform bacteria as set forth in the State and Federal Primary Drinking Water Regulations [Part XII of the Louisiana State Sanitary Code (LAC51:XII)]. Actions have been taken to eliminate the contamination.

This situation was due to:

- On August 26, 2015 Gretna Waterworks collected multiple bacteriological drinking water samples to be tested by the State Health Department. Seven of the routine samples tested positive for bacteriological contamination.
- It is undetermined as to the direct cause of the samples testing positive, but after a preliminary investigation we believe the positive results were due to something other than water quality.

The following corrective actions have been taken:

- Additional testing to confirm the presence of bacteriological contamination (**NO CONTAMINATION FOUND**).
- Review of sampling and chain of custody procedures.
- Additional sample protocols implemented.

What should I do?

- **You do not need to boil your water or take corrective actions.** However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.
- 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.

What does this mean?

- **This is not an emergency.** If it had been you would have been notified immediately. Total coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves. Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that potentially harmful bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.
- Usually, coliforms are a sign that there could be a problem with the treatment or distribution system (pipes). Whenever we detect coliform bacteria in any sample, we do follow-up testing to see if other bacteria of greater concern, such as fecal coliform or E.coli, are present. **We did not find any of these (E.coli) bacteria in our subsequent testing.** If we had, we would have notified you immediately.

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 Gretna Waterworks, LA1051003. If you have questions about this notice please contact the water system directly at 504-363-1540.