

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
TTHM VIOLATION AT The Columbia County Water System

Our community water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have the right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation. We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. We have been notified by the State that our water system exceeded the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for the following:

Violation ID	Compliance Period	Site#	Analyte	Concentration	MCL
2025-1318	1Q2025 - 01/01/2025 - 03/31/2025	501	TTHM	0.083 mg/L	0.080 mg/L
2025-1319	1Q2025 - 01/01/2025 - 03/31/2025	504	TTHM	0.087 mg/L	0.080 mg/L

What should I do? There is nothing you need to do at this time. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. Residents should not be alarmed and do not need to seek alternative water supplies. The supplier is taking corrective actions to ensure that adequate monitoring and reporting will be maintained.

What does this mean?

Some people who drink water containing Trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years, may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What happened? What is being done?

Warm temperatures and water age are two main factors in increasing the production of disinfection byproducts. These two factors resulted in a higher than usual spike in trihalomethanes in the fourth quarter of 2024. Currently a more thorough flushing plan is being utilized to reduce water age and mitigate trihalomethane levels. There has been a dramatic decrease in THM levels, however; the running average is still elevated.

For more information, please contact Margaret Doss at 706-863-6928 or email at: waterquality@columbiacountyga.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 provided by: Columbia County Water System
Water System ID: GA0730000
Date of public notice distributed: 6/5/2025.

Total Trihalomethane Notification FAQ's

What are trihalomethanes?

Total trihalomethanes (TTHMs) are a byproduct of the chlorine disinfection process the County uses to protect its customers from waterborne illnesses like amoebic dysentery, cholera, and typhoid fever. TTHMs form when residual organics in the water react with chlorine.

What caused the TTHM levels to be elevated?

This was caused by the age of the water and the warmer than normal temperatures when the samples were collected. The regulations are based on a running locational average. Higher than normal numbers were found in Quarter 3 of 2024. This number is still causing the regulatory running average to be above the regulatory limit. The current concentration of TTHMs is no longer elevated.

Is the water safe to drink?

Water with elevated levels of TTHMs does not pose an acute health risk. Drinking water with levels slightly above the drinking water standard for a short time does not significantly increase the risk of illness. The health risks linked with TTHMs in water are very small, compared to the risk of potentially deadly infectious diseases in drinking water that is not disinfected.

What has the County done to correct the issue?

We have revised our flushing schedule to assist with reducing the age of the water in the rural parts of our system. We are also in the process of exploring longer-term solutions.

Will a water filter remove TTHMs?

An activated carbon filter will remove TTHMs from the water, such as properly maintained filters found in refrigerators or filtration pitchers.

How often do you collect samples?

Columbia County collects regulatory samples for these chemicals at 8 sample sites throughout the county on a quarterly basis – 32 samples a year – and send them to the EPD lab for analysis. The County also collects screening samples which can be analyzed at the County's Central Laboratory.

Why was there a time lag between the sampling and the public notification?

The regulatory samples are analyzed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) laboratory in Atlanta. Once analyzed, any exceedances have to be communicated by the EPD to the County before the Public Notice can be issued. There is currently a significant lag time between sampling and the official notification from EPD.

Are the TTHM levels elevated in the entire water system?

The levels were elevated at sampling sites on Terrace Drive and on Nature's Way in Appling, GA.