

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Bryant Water and Wastewater Utility Department is a public water system subject to regulation under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The regulations require the notification of customers whenever a violation occurs.

Each month the water system is required to collect bacteriological water samples from specific selected sites to test for total coliforms. If less than 40 bacteriological samples are collected each month, the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for total coliforms is one positive sample per month. Bryant exceeded the MCL in the month of July, 2014 with two positive samples. In this case, both samples were collected at the same collection site from an outside water tap. All other water samples collected for Bryant tested negative for total coliforms. Because more than one sample tested positive under the total coliform rule the Bryant water system is required to notify the persons served by the system.

When one sample tests positive for coliform bacteria, it is necessary to repeat-sample within 24 hours of notification to determine whether there is an actual contamination problem in the system. The proper protocol is:

- Collect one sample from the same location as the positive sample;
- Collect one sample within five service connections upstream from the collection site that showed contamination; and
- Collect one sample within five service connections downstream from the collection site that showed contamination.

This protocol was properly followed in this instance. The three repeat samples tested negative for total coliform.

The exact reason for the bad samples is unknown. Contamination can result from sampling errors such as contamination of the sample bottle or improper preparation of the sample site. In some instances a biofilm containing both mineral deposits and biological material may develop inside pipes or tanks. This material may detach from the pipe and be present in water samples. If the biofilm contains organisms of the total coliform group, these cells could lead to detection of total coliform in the sample. Differentiating between total coliform from biofilm and bacteria originating directly from a disease source is not possible.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards and has determined that the presence of total coliforms is a possible health concern. Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other potentially harmful bacterial may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems. Under this standard no more than 5 percent of the samples collected during a month can contain these bacteria, with the exception that systems collecting fewer than 40 samples per month that have one total coliform positive sample per month are not violating the standard. Drinking water which meets this standard is not usually associated with a health risk from disease causing bacteria and should be considered safe.

Failure to meet the total coliform standard does not mean that the water is unsafe or that alternate sources of water should be used. The Bryant water system has installed dedicated sampling stations at all collection sites to improve the method of collecting samples in the future. Should you have any questions concerning this notice contact the Bryant Water Department at 501-943-0469 or the Engineering Section of the Department of Health at 501-661-2623.