

For Immediate Release
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CONTAMINANT OF EMERGING CONCERN FOUND IN NEW BRIGHTON'S WATER

City has already taken action to preserve safe drinking water - working with the United States on funding a permanent solution

New Brighton, Minn. — April 17, 2015

The City of New Brighton announced today that a contaminant of emerging concern, 1,4-dioxane (dioxane), has been detected in trace amounts in some of the City's wells. The likely source of the dioxane is the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP), which was identified as the source of other contaminants in New Brighton's drinking water supply. Earlier this year, the City announced a settlement agreement with the United States Army to continue federal payment of the costs of owning and operating New Brighton's water treatment facility.

"Although the health risk to residents is low, the City takes any risk seriously," explained Dean Lotter, New Brighton's City Manager. "The City has already acted to remove the risk by using its deep wells, which have been confirmed to be dioxane-free. The City will continue to use these deep wells until a proven treatment technology, funded by the United States Army, is in place to remove dioxane from the wells where it has been detected."

Dioxane acts as a stabilizer in chlorinated solvents, such as trichloroethane (TCA) and trichloroethylene (TCE), solvents that were used during TCAAP operations. Dioxane was only recently identified as a contaminant of emerging concern by environmental and health regulators. Growing scientific knowledge about dioxane and technological advances have led to the ability to detect it at extremely low concentrations. Dioxane has been found in several states across the country, including Arizona, New York, Kansas, New Hampshire, Indiana, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin.

Thus far, no regulatory limit on the amount of dioxane permitted in drinking water has been set under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. However, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has set an advisory limit of 1 part per billion (ppb).

Recent testing conducted by the MDH and the City has detected dioxane in the drinking water at levels ranging from 2.9 ppb to 5.5 ppb.

“The City has already taken the steps needed to provide safe drinking water, so no further action is needed by residents,” Lotter explained. “The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Army have all told us they support the City’s action.”

This discovery also has implications for both Fridley and St. Anthony Village. Fridley has historically received portions of its water supply from New Brighton’s water system. New Brighton has closed the connection between the two communities’ water systems.

“Our water supply has been tested and complies with MDH standards for dioxane,” said Wally Wysopal, City Manager of Fridley. “Residents should have no concerns about drinking and using our water.”

Mark Casey, City Manager of St. Anthony Village, added, “St. Anthony’s water complies with the MDH’s advisory level, and residents can have confidence in the safety of the water.” Both communities intend to continue to test for dioxane in the future.

Because the contamination likely originated at TCAAP, the United States Army is required to fund the costs of treatment as part of its settlement agreement with the City of New Brighton.

“The City is very pleased with the United States Army’s quick response,” Lotter said. “It will take several years for the City to implement a permanent solution, but the United States Army has reaffirmed its promise to ensure that New Brighton residents will continue to have safe drinking water.”

New Brighton has posted additional information concerning dioxane on its webpage (<http://www.ci.new-brighton.mn.us>), including links to fact sheets prepared by the MDH and the USEPA. The City will also be hosting its Annual Open House on May 2, 2015, at 9:00 a.m., at the Community Center. Representatives from New Brighton will be available to answer questions.

For more information, go to: www.ci.new-brighton.mn.us and www.health.state.mn.us/eh.

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