



## DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

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### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER South Kohala Water System Does Not Meet Treatment Requirements August 2007

The South Kohala Water System recently violated a drinking water standard. The Department of Water Supply (DWS) failed to meet the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) treatment technique requirements for the Waimea Treatment Plant of the South Kohala Water System. Although this situation did not require you to take immediate action, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

In order to ensure proper disinfection, water from the Waimea Treatment Plant must be in contact with chlorine for a minimum amount of time. On August 18 and 21, 2007, this did not occur. The DWS incurred a violation for August because the disinfectant levels were lower than the required amount on two days in the month of August.

Although chlorine quickly kills most bacteria, it is less effective against organisms such as viruses and parasites. For this reason, water needs to mix with chlorine for a longer time period to kill such organisms. The amount of time necessary, or the "contact time," depends on the amount of disinfectant in the water and the temperature of the water.

#### What should I do?

- You do **NOT** need to boil your water. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. A home filter will not necessarily solve the problem, because not all home filters protect against parasites. Call National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF) at 1 (800) NSF-8010 or the Water Quality Association at 1 (800) 749-0234 for information on appropriate filters.
- People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may have been 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 United States Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

#### What does this mean?

This is not a situation requiring that you take immediate action. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Tests taken during this same time period did not indicate the presence of bacteria in the water.

*Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. These symptoms, however, are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.*

#### What happened? What is being done?

The disinfectant used at Waimea Treatment Plant is chloramine, which is a combination of chlorine and ammonia. Because of a mechanical fault which occurred in the treatment process, the disinfection levels dropped lower than the required amounts. The fault was repaired after which all treatment parameters at the treatment plant were back to normal and met all requirements for the month of August.

Disinfectant residual levels/contact times so far this month have not met all requirements. The mechanical fault which occurred in August was discovered to be a more complex problem with the equipment than we had at first assumed. For more information, please contact Mr. William Yamamoto at 887-3030.

*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 the Department of Water Supply, South Kohala Water System.  
State Water System ID#: 130

Date Distributed: 10/19/07

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Hawaii Tribune Herald  
October 14, 2007

West Hawaii Today  
October 14, 2007

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