

# DRINKING WATER WARNING

## \_\_\_\_\_ [System] Water Has High Levels of Nitrite

### DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS UNDER 6 MONTHS OLD OR USE IT TO MAKE INFANT FORMULA

Water sample results for a sample taken on \_\_\_\_\_ [date] showed nitrite levels of \_\_\_\_\_ [level] milligrams per liter (mg/L). This is above the nitrite standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), of 1 mg/L. The mandatory confirmation sample that was taken on \_\_\_\_\_ [date] showed nitrite levels of \_\_\_\_\_ mg/L [level]. The average of these two samples was \_\_\_\_\_ mg/L [level] which still exceeded the nitrite MCL. Nitrite in drinking water is a serious health concern for infants less than six months old.

#### What should I do?

- **DO NOT GIVE THE WATER TO INFANTS.** *Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrite in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome.* Blue baby syndrome is indicated by blueness of the skin. Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly, with health deteriorating over a period of days. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.
- Water, juice, and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water. Bottled water or other water low in nitrites should be used for infants until further notice.
- **DO NOT BOIL THE WATER.** Boiling, freezing, filtering, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrite level. Excessive boiling can make the nitrites more concentrated, because nitrites remain behind when the water evaporates.
- Adults and children older than six months can drink the tap water (nitrite is a concern for infants because they can't process nitrites in the same way adults can). However, if you are pregnant or have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

#### What happened? What is being done? When will the problem be corrected?

Nitrite in drinking water can come from natural, industrial, or agricultural sources (including septic systems and run-off). Levels of nitrite in drinking water can vary throughout the year. Upon the State's approval, we'll let you know when the amount of nitrite is again below the limit.

[Describe corrective action, seasonal fluctuations, and when system expects to return to compliance. If a confirmation sample was not performed within the required time frame you must provide an explanation in this section].

***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.***

For more information, please contact:

Responsible Person	System Name	System Address (Street)
Phone Number	System PWSID#	System Address (City,State,Zip)

Violation Awareness Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Notice Distributed: \_\_\_\_\_ Method of Distribution \_\_\_\_\_

#### Public Notification Certification:

The public water system named above hereby affirms that public notification has been provided to its consumers in accordance with all delivery, content, format, and deadline requirements specified in 15A NCAC 18C .1523.

Owner/Operator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Print Name) (Date)

## Instructions for Nitrite MCL Notice

Exceeding the nitrite maximum contaminant level (MCL) is a **Tier 1** violation. Therefore, **within 24 hours** after you learn of the analyses results from your laboratory, you must provide public notice to persons served (C.F.R. 141.202(b)), collect a confirmation sample and have it analyzed for nitrite by a North Carolina certified laboratory and contact the Public Water Supply Section. You should also inform your local health department and notify health professionals in the area of the violation. People may call their doctors with questions, and the doctors should have the information they need to respond appropriately. They also need to be sure the water is not provided to infants in their care. You must use one or more of the following methods to deliver the notice to consumers (C.F.R. 141.202(c)):

- Radio
- Television
- Hand or direct delivery
- Posting in conspicuous locations

You may need to use additional methods (e.g. newspaper, delivery of multiple copies to hospitals, clinics, or apartment buildings), since notice must be provided in a manner reasonably calculated to reach all persons served.

The notice on the reverse is appropriate for hand delivery or a newspaper notice. However, you may wish to modify it before using it for radio or TV notice. If you modify the notice, you must still include all the required elements, and the standard language (including the health effects language) in ***bold italics*** must not be changed. This language is mandatory (C.F.R. 141.205(d)). If you post or hand deliver, print your notice on letterhead, if available.

### **Population Served**

Make sure it is clear who is served by your water system--you may need to list the areas you serve.

### **Alternative Sources of Water**

If you are providing alternative sources of water for infants, your notice should say where it can be obtained. Remember that bottled water can also be contaminated. If you are providing bottled water, make sure it meets the standards for nitrites by contacting the bottler and asking for the most recent test results.

### **Corrective Action**

In your notice, describe corrective actions you are taking. The bullet below describes one action commonly taken by water systems with nitrite violations. Use this language, if appropriate, or develop your own:

- We are investigating water treatment and other options. These may include drilling a new well, mixing the water with low-nitrite water from another source, or buying water from another water system.

### **Repeat Notices**

If this is a repeat notice (as required by the State), or if your system's nitrite levels fluctuate around the MCL, you may wish to include an explanation similar to the following:

You were initially notified of high nitrite levels on [date]. Since that time we have been monitoring the nitrite concentration every three months. Seasonal fluctuations in nitrite concentrations have been observed, due to nitrites contained in fertilizer. It appears that high nitrites occur during the late summer and fall. Note that prior to [year] we were meeting drinking water standards for nitrites.

### **After Issuing the Notice [C.F.R. 141.31(d)]**

Within **10 days** after completing the initial public notification, the Public Water Supply Section **MUST** receive a copy of the notice you distributed to your customers with your signature and date on the Public Notification Certification (located at the bottom of the notice) indicating that you have fully complied with all the public notice requirements.

**Mail your notice/certification to the Public Water Supply Section, Compliance Services Branch, ATTN: Public Notification Rule Manager, 1634 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1634.** Retain a copy of these documents for your files.

It is a good idea to issue a "problem corrected" notice when the State has determined that the violation is resolved.