



THE CITY OF
CANTON
THOMAS M. BERNABEI, MAYOR

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Water Department Superintendent
Canton Water Department
2664 Harrisburg Road N.E.
Canton, OH 44705

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2017

Contact: Utility Billing
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MEDIA ADVISORY: Perry Township Discolored Water Update

CANTON, Ohio – The Canton Water Department has previously reported the temporarily reduction in the amount of water pumped from the Sugarcreek well field due to the dumping of a significant quantity of drilling mud into the Beach City Quarry that is adjacent from the well field. This was done to allow actions to be taken to protect our water source and document that the water continued to be safe to drink. We have updates on progress and testing that we want to share, below.

Discolored Water

The decreased pumping at Sugarcreek caused the water in a portion of our distribution system to become temporarily discolored. This discoloration was due to iron and manganese sediment becoming stirred up. As is explained in more detail below, this is **NOT** a health concern.

To minimize the discolored water, we started fire hydrant flushing. Flushing the fire hydrants removes much of the sediment. We have continued to allow the fire hydrants to run at low flow levels in the West Manor area to help maintain water that is without discoloration. We have also taken a closer look at the water pipes in this area. We have discovered the pipes were not designed to provide optimum flow. As a result, this area is prone to discolored water events. Flushing the hydrants will continue to help alleviate this problem. We are looking at long term solutions, but these will likely take years to complete and cost many millions of dollars. However, we expect that once the Sugarcreek well field returns to normal pumping rates, the discoloration issue will end.

When the discoloration was first noticed, many residents expressed concern that the water was not safe. To address that concern, we collected and analyzed a number of water samples. All of the results showed that all health-based compounds were either not detected or were well below the Ohio EPA established limits—meaning the water *is* safe to drink.

In addition, we tested for iron and manganese. As expected, the initial samples showed levels of iron and manganese above the standards for taste, odor, and staining. However, once fire hydrant flushing was started, the levels of iron and manganese quickly returned to normal levels.

Drilling Mud Clean-up

Efforts have progressed to remove the source of the problem – drilling mud dumped in the Beach City Quarry that is next to the Sugarcreek well field. The City of Canton has actively monitored this progress in conjunction with Ohio EPA. To date, the drilling mud has been removed from the quarry. Monitoring wells have been installed close to the area where the drilling mud was dumped. These wells allow us to

test the water in the aquifer, which is the layer of rock, sediment or soil that holds the underground source of water, to see if the mud dumped has negatively affected the aquifer. The first test results from these wells show that there is no contamination in the aquifer close to the pits. These monitoring wells will continue to be tested each quarter for the next year and then twice a year for two more years to make sure there is no contamination.

In addition to testing the monitoring wells close to the pits, the production wells that the City gets its water from are also being tested on the same schedule. The first samples from the production wells also showed no contamination.

The City is continuing to discuss some final clean-up issues with Ohio EPA. Once they are resolved, we will return to normal pumping from the Sugarcreek Water Treatment Plant and well field. In the meantime, our other well fields are providing the water needed for our customers.

Cost of Water

Some of our customers have asked whether their water rates will be affected by the drilling mud issue. The answer is no. Prior to the drilling mud incident, an 8% system-wide rate increase went into effect March 1, 2017. There have been no increases or added fees since that time. The cost of flushing the fire hydrants and the sampling to ensure good water quality in the West Manor area are not billed separately to people in that area. These costs will be handled as normal Operations and Maintenance expenses.

Water bills are based on the amount of water that passes through the meter to your house. Once you exceed the minimum fixed rate, you are billed for only for the excess water that you use. If you have noticed an increase in your bill during this last three-month period, it is likely due to increased water usage during the summer months. This trend is typical every summer. To see how your bill compares with others, the average annual water bill for residential customers outside the City is about \$325.00 per year, or \$27.00 per month. This is likely the lowest utility expense in your household.

If you have questions about your bill or wish to view your account history for the last several years, please feel free to contact Utility Billing for this information. They can be reached at (330) 649-8100.

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