
From: Prysby, Mike (DEQ)
Sent: Monday, September 08, 2014 10:00 AM
To: Wurfel, Brad (DEQ);Feuerstein, Heather (DEQ);Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ);Seymour, Veronica (DEQ);Busch, Stephen (DEQ);Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Cc: Philip, Kris (DEQ)
Subject: City of Flint BWA Media Inquiry

Mr. Ron Fonger from the Flint Journal called me this morning concerning the BWA issued for the western portion of the Flint water distribution system. I confirmed Ron's statement that the advisory was issued on Friday Sept 5th for a localized area and was expanded on Sat Sept 6th after samples from an additional routine sampling location tested positive for total coliform bacteria. I confirmed with Ron that none of the samples detected fecal coliform. Ron asked if there was a cause to the most recent contamination. I responded that the city has not identified a specific cause; however, (as I discussed with Ron in the August 20th inquiry - first BWA episode in Flint), potential causes including mainbreaks, unprotected cross connections, unauthorized connections, loss of pressure, etc. will need to be investigated by the city. Low chlorine residuals in this area may also be a contributing factor and could be the result of localized stagnation. The city will need to review distribution system operation, determine whether stagnation is occurring, and modify operation as needed to alleviate this problem. Next, Ron asked if the problem was attributed to the Flint WTP treating water from the Flint River. I informed Ron that treated water from the WTP continues to meet the drinking water standard for total and fecal coliform bacteria and that there have been no detects for these contaminants leaving the WTP. Ron also acknowledged that there has been significant water loss from the water system and asked if that could be a potential cause. I explained to Ron that the loss of water of the magnitude that Flint has been experiencing points to large mainbreaks. Some of these breaks have been repaired; however, the work involved in repairing a broken watermain may or may not introduce contamination into the water system. Critical factors include the extent of the area that may have been taken out of service to complete the repair, how well the trench area is kept clean and de-watered, chlorination at the site, and flushing after the repair. Repair records needs to be reviewed to determine if any major repairs were recently completed in or near the affected area.

Ron's last question pertained to the number of BWAs issued on a state-wide basis. I did not have that information available to Ron; however, upon further discussion with Steve, I will provide Ron with a history of total coliform MCL violations (state-wide basis) as soon as I have the information available.

We do

Michael Prysby, P.E.
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