



BOROUGH OF TARENTUM

WATER DEPARTMENT
618 E. 5TH AVENUE
TARENTUM, PENNSYLVANIA 15084
724.224.1818

May 5, 2025

Public Notice – Water Quality Update TTHM Monitoring and Planned Improvements

Dear Residents,

We are writing to inform you that our recent water quality testing showed that the running annual average for **Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)** exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) set by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This is the second such violation in the past six months.

What Are TTHMs?

TTHMs are byproducts that form when chlorine, used to disinfect drinking water, reacts with natural organic matter in the water. TTHMs are monitored because long-term exposure at elevated levels may pose health risks. However, **the water remains safe for daily use** such as drinking, bathing, cooking, and cleaning. If the situation required immediate health warnings or alternate water sources, the DEP would mandate additional actions.

Why Did This Happen?

This is not due to a single incident. The DEP calculates compliance using a **running average of samples collected over three months**, meaning even one high reading can affect the average for several cycles. In our case, certain areas of the distribution system, especially older sections with low water usage or “dead-end” lines, can lead to water sitting too long in pipes. This increases the likelihood of TTHM formation.

What Are We Doing About It?

The Borough is taking the following corrective actions:

- **Increased hydrant flushing** throughout the year, particularly in low-usage areas, to improve circulation and reduce water age. Historically, we have completed two flushing a year. That will increase to at least three this year, possibly four flushings. We are also exploring automatic hydrant flushers for certain sections of town.
- **Requesting DEP approval** to move the potassium permanganate chemical injection point from the water plant to the pump house. This would allow the treatment process to begin earlier, improving the breakdown of organic materials that contribute to TTHM formation.
- **Evaluating long-term upgrades** to aging infrastructure, particularly looping in dead-end lines, to modernize and improve water quality.

Cost and Planning

These changes, including flushing, treatment adjustments, and infrastructure design, are being evaluated now. Depending on DEP approvals and funding, engineering, permitting, and construction (where needed) will take several months to implement. We will keep the community informed as plans progress.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue working to improve the quality and reliability of Tarentum’s water system. Your safety remains our top priority.

Sincerely,

Jeff Adams,
Water Plant Manager