



Water Boards

State Water Board Response to Media Coverage of the City of Sacramento's Aluminum Chlorohydrate Trial (ACH) at the Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has been following the media coverage related to the city of Sacramento's trial of aluminum chlorohydrate (ACH) at its Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant and the elevated disinfection byproduct levels during the trial and understands the public's concern over the safety of its drinking water.

The city of Sacramento public water system is regulated by the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water. The Division directly oversees the regulatory compliance of the city's public water system to ensure it produces water that meets all drinking water standards. Staff within the Division of Drinking Water have been diligently working with the city regarding this issue and have been reviewing Sacramento's actions during the trial period.

Based on the required compliance data provided by the city related to the trial, and reviewed and verified by Drinking Water staff, it has been determined there were no violations of the disinfection byproduct maximum contaminant level (MCL) or corresponding threat to public health during or after the ACH trial. The water that is currently being provided by the city is safe to drink.

For a better understanding of the city of Sacramento's ACH trial and what disinfection byproducts are, it's important to know these key facts:

- Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) -- or disinfection byproducts - are a chronic contaminant, meaning their health effects only show up after long-term exposure. The TTHM maximum contaminant level (MCL) was set based on a person consuming two liters of water a day over an average lifespan of 70 years.
- Sacramento's compliance with the TTHM MCL of 80 parts per billion (ppb) is based on the average of four quarterly samples at each of the city's 12 sampling sites. If the four-quarter average, determined every quarter, is greater than 80 ppb at any of the 12 sites, the city would be in violation of the MCL.
- Sacramento sought and received approval from the Division of Drinking Water to conduct a trial to replace Aluminum Sulfate (Alum) with ACH at its Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant. This trial started in May of 2013.



- Based on individual TTHM results, five of the 12 sample sites from the April 2014 samples were above 80 ppb; the city ended the ACH trial in April 2014. The results of these individual samples were not a violation of the TTHM MCL since the MCL is based, in the state and federal regulations, on the average of the most recent four-quarter sample results for each sample site.
- In October 2014, Sacramento conducted its routine quarterly evaluation to determine the potential of having a TTHM violation in the next calendar quarter. This quarterly evaluation is required by state and federal TTHM regulations. The results of this evaluation indicated that the TTHM MCL may be exceeded at one sample site in the first quarter of 2015.
- The city informed the Division of Drinking Water of its intent to supplement its sources of supply for the first calendar quarter of 2015 to ensure it would not serve water to its customers that would violate the TTHM MCL for that quarter. The city supplied some of its customers with water from the Sacramento County Water Agency for the entire first quarter of 2015. TTHM samples were taken on a monthly basis from the impacted sample sites during this three-month period to ensure a TTHM MCL violation did not occur.

Based on these facts, the Division of Drinking Water does not anticipate initiating any further investigation into the city of Sacramento's actions related to the ACH trial. However, the Division of Drinking Water will continue its regulatory oversight of the city's public water system to make sure it continues to provide safe drinking water for public consumption.

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