



# Heritage Ranch Community Services District

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Dear HRCSD customers,

This letter is intended to supplement a similar notice that went out with the June 2022 billing cycle and includes additional information.

Our water system recently failed a drinking water standard. This is **not** an emergency. As our customers you have a right to know what you should do, what happened, and what we are doing to correct this situation. We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results we received for the previous three calendar quarters show that our system exceeds the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for haloacetic acids, a disinfection process byproduct. The MCL standard for haloacetic acids is 60 parts per billion (ppb) and is based on a locational running annual average (LRAA) for each sample site. The LRAA of haloacetic acids at the Black Horse Lane sample site were 70, 80, and 75 ppb; and at the Wood Duck Lane sample site were 62, 74, and 83 ppb.

## What should I do?

- **You do not need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply.**
- This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. However, some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids more than the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.
- If you have other health issues concerning the consumption of this water, you may wish to consult your doctor.

## What can you do at home?

[Reverse osmosis](#) filters have been shown to reduce HAA5 but are expensive.

[Activated carbon](#) filters such as Brita and PUR filters can also reduce HAA5 levels. There are different types from simple pitchers to under sink models and are very affordable.

(Consumers should verify which products are NSF/ANSI 42 and/or 53 certified to remove HAA5.)

Other helpful links:

<https://drinktap.org/Water-Info/Whats-in-My-Water/Disinfection-Byproducts>

<https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/stage-1-and-stage-2-disinfectants-and-disinfection-byproducts-rules>

## What happened? What was done?

As previously mentioned, this is not an immediate health risk. Organic levels in Nacimiento Reservoir and Nacimiento River have substantially increased over time and most recently the Chimney Fire, resulting in higher levels of haloacetic acids created from the treatment process, specifically the use of chlorine for required disinfection.

We are actively pursuing all available options to lower the organics and the haloacetic acid MCL's within the system. Staff continues to adjust the water treatment and distribution system processes and are currently working closely with the Division of Drinking Water to fine tune those processes while maintaining compliance with many other parameters. We are renovating the Water Treatment Plant filters, testing a new chemical(s) to improve removal of organics, continue a robust waterline flushing program, and have recently completed construction of a raw water vertical intake facility.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Disinfection Byproducts

### What is Disinfection?

Water utilities play a central role in protecting public health by ridding drinking water of potentially harmful bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms. They do so through a treatment process called disinfection.

Pathogens, such as Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and viruses, are often found in source water and can cause gastrointestinal illness. Illnesses include diarrhea, vomiting, cramps and other health risks. In many cases, water needs to be disinfected to inactivate (or kill) these microbial pathogens. However, disinfectants can react with naturally-occurring materials in the water to form disinfection byproducts.

### What are Disinfection Byproducts?

Disinfection byproducts are formed when disinfectants (e.g. chlorine) used in the water treatment process react with natural organic matter (e.g. decaying vegetation) present in the source water. Different disinfectants produce different types or amounts of disinfection byproducts. Disinfection byproducts for which regulations have been established have been identified in drinking water, including [trihalomethanes](#), [haloacetic acids](#), [bromate](#), and [chlorite](#).

### What are Haloacetic Acids and HAA5?

Haloacetic acids (HAA5, HAA6Br, HAA9) are a group of [disinfectant byproducts](#) that are formed when disinfectants, such as chlorine or chloramine, are used to treat water and react with naturally occurring organic and inorganic matter present in source waters. Which HAA forms depends on several factors, so HAAs are often tracked and described as groups of individual acidic compounds.

HAA5 includes: dibromoacetic acid, dichloroacetic acid, monobromoacetic acid, monochloroacetic acid, trichloroacetic acid.

### What is the Disinfection Byproduct Rule?

Following the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, the EPA set standards for HAA5 in a series of regulations ([Disinfection Byproducts Rule Stage 1 and 2](#)). The federal enforceable standard for HAA5 is a maximum running annual average for each monitoring location of 60 micrograms/liter.

The Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (DBPR) reduces drinking water exposure to disinfection byproducts. The Rule applies to community water systems and non-transient non-community systems, including those serving fewer than 10,000 people that add a disinfectant to the drinking water during any part of the treatment process.

The Stage 2 DBPR strengthens public health protection by tightening compliance monitoring requirements for Trihalomethanes (TTHM) and Haloacetic acids (HAA5).

### What are the health effects?

Data from research studies indicate that several HAAs, e.g., dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid, may be carcinogenic in laboratory animals. Exposure to other HAAs has also been associated with reproductive and developmental effects in laboratory animals. The current Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) set for HAA5 is because of concern that exposure to HAAs over many years may increase the risk of cancer.