IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER: West Caldwell Failed to Meet Established Water Quality Parameter (WQP) Levels for pH

Dear Resident,

Our water system violated a New Jersey drinking water requirement for pH, as explained in more detail below. As our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation.

Our water system receives corrosion control treated water to help prevent lead and/or copper in pipes from dissolving into the water. In 2022, the corrosion control treatment was deemed optimized, and therefore, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) established optimal Water Quality Parameters (WQP) at which the corrosion control treatment functions most effectively. We monitor WQP values per federal regulations.

During the January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 monitoring period, our WQP sample results did not meet the optimal WQP values set by the NJDEP for 29 days, and the water system cannot be below the minimum level(s) or outside the range(s) set by the NJDEP for more than nine (9) days. Specifically, on May 1, 2024 the WQP pH sample result of 6.6 did not meet the optimal WQP minimum pH value of 7.0 and the additional WQP pH sample result of 6.8 taken on May 15, 2024 continued to not meet the optimal WQP pH value. We did not have a WQP sample within the optimal WQP pH value until May 30, 2024.

Additionally, during the July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 monitoring period, our WQP sample results did not meet the optimal WQP values set by the NJDEP for 84 days, and the water system cannot be below the minimum level(s) or outside the range(s) set by the NJDEP for more than nine (9) days. Specifically, on August 14, 2024 the average WQP pH sample results of 6.8 did not meet the optimal WQP minimum pH value of 7.0 and we did not have a WQP sample within the optimal WQP pH value until November 6, 2024.

In addition to monitoring optimal WQP values, our water system routinely monitors for lead and copper. Our water system failed to conduct the required monitoring for lead and copper during the most recent monitoring period of January 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025. Therefore, we do not have recent results to demonstrate we are in compliance with the Federal action levels for lead and copper. The last monitoring we conducted July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 demonstrated we were in compliance with the Federal action levels for lead and copper. There was not a lead action level exceedance in 2024. If there is a lead action level exceedance, you will be notified accordingly.

What does this mean?

<u>This is not an emergency.</u> In an emergency, you would be notified within 24 hours. <u>Our water system has NOT exceeded lead or copper action levels in 2024.</u> The 2024 reported optimal WQP pH violations do not mean that there is confirmed lead and/or copper in your drinking water. However, since WQP

standards are implemented to optimize corrosion control to protect residents from lead and copper potentially leaching from internal pipes and solder, it is important to be aware of the health effects of drinking water that exceeds lead and copper action levels and steps you may take to reduce your exposure.

- Health effects of drinking water that exceeds lead action level: Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.

- Health effects of drinking water that exceeds copper action level: Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal physician.

If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about your drinking water.

Typically, lead and/or copper enters drinking water by leaching from pipes and plumbing components in homes and/or building(s). We receive treated water to reduce the wearing away of lead and/or copper leaching from pipes and plumbing components into the water and optimal WQP values set to ensure effectiveness of the treatment. Failure to meet the set values requires us to evaluate the currently installed treatment and operation thereof and take actions necessary to meet the optimal WQP values.

What Should I Do?

You do not need to use an alternate water supply (e.g., bottled water)**.** However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. Additionally, if you would like to reduce your potential exposure to lead and/or copper in drinking water, you may choose to take the following steps:

- Run water to flush out lead and/or copper. Run water for 15 – 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking if it hasn't been used for several hours.
- Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; Lead dissolves more quickly into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.

- Do not boil water. Boiling water will not reduce lead and/or copper levels.
- Regularly remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures. Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Regularly remove and clean aerators screens located at the tip of faucets and remove any particles.

For additional steps you may take to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water, see https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/dwc-lead-consumer.html.

What is being done?

Samples of pH have been meeting the optimal WQP pH value since December 31, 2024. We receive water from Passaic Valley Water Commission and we have advised them of the violations. In the event of future excursions below the minimum pH value, we will take immediate confirmatory sampling and submit such to NJDEP, in accordance with our NJDEP approved sampling plan. This violation is primarily a result of our failure to take action and resample immediately to ensure compliance with the set optimal WQP values, and submit updated values to NJDEP; therefore, resulting in a violation for failing to demonstrate compliance with the set optimal WQP values. Compliance requires that we report compliant samples the following day, which we failed to do, and which is why we have a violation for not meeting optimal WQP for more than nine (9) days. Accordingly, we have also undergone further training on reporting protocols. We have completed these corrective actions on October 17, 2024. Updates will be provided on our website every three months at www.westcaldwell.com.

For more information, please contact Dominic Rehbein at 973-226-2300x3405 or drehbein@westcaldwell.com.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by West Caldwell. State Water System ID: 0721001.

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