



Manchester Township

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Office of The Mayor

Kenneth T. Palmer
Mayor

Press Release
From the Office of Mayor Kenneth T. Palmer
July 25, 2018

TWO WELLS TAKEN OUT OF SERVICE ON MANCHESTER'S EAST SIDE

Manchester Township residents can rest assured that an issue regarding an elevated presence of radium, a naturally-occurring element in our geographical area, in one of our wells has been immediately resolved without concern to public health. All water in Manchester Township is and has been safe to drink. The following information outlines how our Township wells operate, as well as the procedures for regular testing by the State of New Jersey and how we remedy concerns with water quality.

This notice is to provide Manchester residents with important information about our water system on the east side of town. For the past decade or so, the east side of town utilized six wells in varying degrees to pump water into our system. They include wells ten (10), eleven (11) and twelve (12) which are deep wells that draw water from the Raritan Aquifer. These three wells are located at our water facility on Route 571 and provide the large majority of our water year round. We also utilize wells four (4), seven (7) and eight (8) which are shallow wells that draw water from the Cohansey Aquifer. Well 4 is located along Route 70 near Leisure Knoll and wells 7 and 8 are located adjacent to each other between Holly Oaks and Renaissance. Wells 7 and 8 are used primarily during our high peak summer months to accommodate our irrigation needs. As you know, we have one elevated water storage tank that holds up to 1,000,000 gallons and we also have a 1,000,000 gallon tank at the water facility on Route 571.

On July 10, after normally scheduled quarterly testing by the State of New Jersey, well 8 had an elevated presence of radium. Radium is a naturally occurring radioactive metal that is found in trace amounts in rocks, soils and groundwater. For the past decade, well 8 has produced water within state guidelines. As mentioned above, the State of New Jersey performs quarterly testing and if the rolling average for one year exceeds 5 PCI/L, the well is deemed not compliant and the township has one year to remedy the situation. During the one year period, state law would allow Manchester Township to continue using the well. After the July testing, it was determined that during a 3 week period in June our results caused us to exceed the one year rolling average. Upon receipt of the testing results from the State, we immediately closed well 8. Out of an abundance of caution, we also closed well 7 considering its close proximity to well 8.

Please rest assured, our drinking water is safe and has been safe. Certainly, if there was an immediate concern, the State would not allow the Township to continue to use the well for one year while we fix the issue. Based on scientific studies, one person out of ten thousand would suffer health risks if they consumed two liters of water per day for a period 70 years with levels in excess of 5 PCI/L.

Also, please know that we have the capacity and ability to meet all our residents' needs for water. Should an emergency arise, we also have an inter-connection valve with Suez Water's system on Northampton Boulevard in Pine Lake Park that was built before we renovated the elevated water storage tank.

Within 30 days from the State's notice to the Township, due to the elevated reading, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection requires the Township to send a letter to all residents who are in the service area of well 8 notifying them of the occurrence. That letter will go out within the week. As stated above, radium is a naturally occurring metal in ground water. In fact, it is prevalent in Ocean County due to our sandy soils and our reliance on the shallow Cohansey Aquifer. Wells that are serviced from the deeper Raritan Aquifer do not have this issue.

Fortunately, over the past few years, we have made steady improvements to our aging water infrastructure. The first major step was refurbishing the elevated water storage tank last fall and creating the inter-connection with Suez. We have also been refurbishing wells and pumps throughout the town. The next major step is to construct a second elevated water storage tank and construct an inter-connection with Lakehurst. We have already begun the preliminary work to arrange for state financing for the new elevated water storage tank.

Once again, please know that our water is and has been safe to drink. The purpose of this press release is to notify all residents of the issue and that it has been immediately resolved.

I invite you to take a look at the frequently asked questions about radium section from the United States Geological Society at https://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/trace/radium/Ra_FAQ.html or the State of Massachusetts website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/health-effects-of-radium-radiation-exposure>.