



Athens-Clarke County  
Public Utilities Department  
124 E. Hancock Ave.  
Athens, GA 30601  
706-613-3470 • accgov.com/PublicUtilities

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Dear Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Dept. Customer,

The Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department (PUD) conducts thousands of tests annually for common substances found in water. One test monitors Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) levels, a disinfection byproduct, at eight (8) monitoring stations across Athens-Clarke County (ACC).

TTHMs form when chlorine used for disinfection reacts with naturally occurring organic material found in water. They are colorless and will evaporate out of the water into the air.

Levels of TTHM generally increase in the summer months due to the warmer temperatures, but can also be affected by seasonal changes in source water quality, by changing amounts of disinfection added, or the length of time the water stands in the pipe system.

During the third quarter ending September 2022, we found an elevated reading at the River Shoals Drive monitoring location. The results for the period exceeded the 0.080 ppm MCL with a reading of 0.083 ppm, causing the locational running annual average (LRAA) for TTHMs to exceed the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) limits.

PUD has added an additional automatic flusher and increased the flushing schedule of our water distribution lines in the affected area to reduce TTHM levels. Our most recent test results show we have returned to compliance in the fourth quarter of 2022 with a reading of 0.036 ppm, well below the established limits.

The TTHM finding is not an emergency or an immediate health threat; if it were, the PUD would notify you immediately. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions; no alternative water source is necessary.

This notice aims to inform you about your water quality and update you regarding the TTHM levels. We continue to work to minimize the formation of TTHM while ensuring we maintain an adequate level of disinfectant to meet state and federal drinking water standards. Chlorine disinfection effectively removes deadly water-borne illnesses such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid.

The PUD remains committed to protecting the health of our community and providing the quality water services on which you depend. Globally, the United States has some of the highest standards for tap water, and we have consistently met those standards.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.acgov.com/TTHM](http://www.acgov.com/TTHM). You may also contact the Water Treatment Superintendent, William Cottrell, at 706-613-3481.

Sincerely,  
Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department

#### IS MY WATER SAFE?

The TTHM finding is not an emergency or immediate health threat. If it were, the PUD would notify you immediately.

#### DO I NEED TO BOIL THE WATER OR TAKE ACTION?

You do not need to boil your water or use an alternate water supply, such as bottled water, unless directed to by a physician.

#### CAN I DRINK THE WATER?

Yes, your tap water remains safe for you and pets to use as you have in the past.

#### WHY IS OUR WATER SYSTEM EXPERIENCING INCREASED TTHMS?

Two factors are likely to have resulted in the exceedance:

1. The summer months increase water temperatures which allows the chlorine to evaporate more quickly, producing TTHM.
2. Lower demand in the affected area allows water to stay in the pipe longer and more time for the chlorine to react with organics in the water.

#### WILL YOU SEND AN UPDATE ON TTHM LEVELS?

The latest results find the TTHM levels well below the limit at all locations. We will post updates regarding TTHM levels at [acgov.com/TTHM](http://acgov.com/TTHM).

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

### ***The ACC Public Utilities Department has levels of TTHM above drinking water standards***

The Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department monitors your drinking water for the presence of disinfection byproducts, including one substance known as Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM). We are required to keep a locational running annual average of our quarterly readings for TTHMs at eight (8) locations throughout Athens-Clarke County.

If the test results from the last four (4) quarters are above the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 0.080 parts per million (ppm), we are required to notify our customers. At our sampling site on River Shoals Drive, the results for the period ending September 2022 exceeded the 0.080 ppm MCL with a reading of 0.083 ppm.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

There is nothing you need to do, and you can safely continue normal use of Athens-Clarke County drinking water. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions, and no alternative water source is necessary.

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

The exceedance is not an emergency and poses no immediate health risk. If it had been, the Public Utilities Department would notify you immediately.

TTHM are four volatile organic chemicals that can form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter in the water. Some people who drink water containing Trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk. If you have any specific health concerns, you should seek advice from your doctor.

### **WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS BEING DONE?**

The Environmental Protection Agency requires the disinfection of drinking water to inactivate possible pathogens. Athens-Clarke County disinfects our water with sodium hypochlorite. Disinfectants can combine with naturally-occurring organic and inorganic matter present in water to form disinfection byproducts such as TTHM. The risk of illness from TTHM is much lower than that of drinking water that has not been disinfected. Regardless, Athens-Clarke County is committed to addressing the violation of the TTHM limit.

We have taken several corrective actions, including increasing the flushing of our water distribution lines in the affected area to reduce the time water stands in the pipes and TTHM levels. We are continuing to evaluate process changes to reduce the formation of disinfection byproducts in the distribution system. Our most recent TTHM concentration at the River Shoals Road testing location was 0.036 mg/L, demonstrating these measures are working to prevent elevated numbers in the future.

Please contact our Water Treatment Superintendent, William Cottrell, at 706-613-3481 or visit our website at [www.acgov.com/TTHM](http://www.acgov.com/TTHM) for more information.

*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 post this notice in a public place or distribute copies by hand or mail.*