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## Well and water treatment plant reopens

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**MILLBURY**— An Aquarion Water Co. well and water treatment facility, closed since August, reopened today after tests found no further perchlorate contamination.

Aquarion and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection had closed the facility when tests found 10 parts per billion of perchlorate, an ingredient used in rocket and jet fuels, explosives, and fireworks. The DEP said that levels higher than two parts per billion could harm pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants, children up to age 12 and individuals with hypothyroidism.

On Aug. 28, Aquarion issued an advisory that those in the at-risk population should not drink the water. The general population was advised that the contamination was not serious enough to stop them from drinking the water.

Subsequent tests found no perchlorate contamination, and the advisory was lifted three days later.

Larry L. Bingaman, senior vice president of operations at Aquarion, said the company is investigating whether the initial test and one follow-up test that found perchlorate were false positives.

“All subsequent samples have been at the nondetect level,” he said, estimating that about 60 samples have been taken since the perchlorate was found in August.

“We’re investigating the validity of those original samples,” he said.

Even as the advisory was lifted Sept. 1, the well and treatment center remained off-line as Aquarion officials continued their investigation of the perchlorate contamination.

“Additional precautionary measures for monitoring for perchlorate have been implemented by Aquarion and will continue at the Millbury Avenue well and water treatment facility in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recommendations,” according to a press release from Aquarion.

While the well and water treatment facility were out of service, Aquarion continued to use its Jacques and Oak Pond wells, as well as an interconnection with the city of Worcester, to meet system demand.

“We are also appreciative of our customers who voluntarily conserved water during this period and hope that they will continue to help us protect and conserve this important resource,” said Mr. Bingaman. “This incident underscores the need for everyone to be vigilant in protecting public water supplies and to report any suspicious activity or illegal dumping immediately to Aquarion, MassDEP and/or the Millbury Police Department.”

Mr. Bingaman said Aquarion did not suspect the contamination was caused by illegal dumping, but said that “we should always be vigilant” around public water supplies.

The DEP requires that public water suppliers test annually for perchlorate. Previous test results from September 2007 did not show any perchlorate in treated water sent into the distribution system, Aquarion officials said.

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