

Kitsap Connection

For customers of Kitsap PUD's drinking water utility October/November, 2016

Working Through Billing Changes

Last newsletter detailed changes we would be making to our billing procedures. As you will remember, those changes required a "transition" billing in the month of September. Just a reminder: EVERYONE received a bill in September. Those who received a bill in July will be back on a regular two-month cycle with their October bill. Those who received a bill in August will be back on a two-month cycle with their November bill. We appreciate the patience and understanding you have shown as we have implemented these changes. The transition has gone relatively smoothly; except for one glitch: some people's bills showed an erroneous past due message. We apologize for this error and believe we have addressed it in our system. At any rate, we are halfway through what we knew would be a challenging time. We are excited for the changes being made and have received positive comments on the new bill format. Thank you. And now...

Erin Brockovich Contaminant Found in Nation's Drinking Water!

So screamed the headlines in late September when results of a nationwide water quality screening were made public. In case you missed it, a contaminant known as Chromium 6—made famous in the movie *Erin Brockovich*—was found in almost 90% of drinking water systems sampled. For water system managers around the country, this instantly became a problem. Not one of water quality and public health so much as one of public relations and information.

To better understand this, let's look at the primary tool with which we ensure the safety of our nation's drinking water: the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency sets limits on "contaminants" allowed in the nation's public water systems. These limits, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) are designed to prevent adverse health effects from minerals and other compounds found in water supplies. When water contains a contaminant in excess of an MCL, the water must be treated to reduce the contaminant. MCLs have been established for over 90 contaminants. These include organic and inorganic chemicals, microorganisms, radionuclides, disinfection by-products and more. Included in this is Chromium, which has a regulatory MCL of 100 parts per billion. It is important to remember that the vast majority of these regulated contaminants are naturally occurring.

As part of its ongoing oversight of the nation's water supplies, the U.S. EPA periodically screens public water systems for "unregulated contaminants". This is a fact-finding exercise meant to indicate whether additional MCL regulations are needed under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Between 2013 and 2015 the U.S. EPA screened the nation's drinking water systems for 30 unregulated contaminants. Included in this group was a specific analysis for Chromium 6.

The laboratory protocol screened to 0.03 parts per billion for the presence of Chromium 6. Perhaps not surprisingly (it is naturally occurring), trace levels of Chromium 6 were found in the vast majority of samples taken.

Kitsap PUD's North Peninsula Water System was one of the systems sampled. Chromium 6 was detected at an average level of 1.2 parts per billion. The highest level detected in Washington was 9.9 parts per billion.

Not caught in the *Erin Brockovich* type headlines is that this is a routine part of our nation's regulatory process: The EPA periodically screens the nation's water supplies for potential contaminants of concern. If these contaminants are found at levels that raise health concerns, the EPA promulgates laws to limit the level at which these can be found in public water systems. The EPA will now analyze the results of the latest Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring and see if additional regulations are required under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

See reverse for more information on Chromium and levels of Chromium found in local supplies.



Frequently Asked Questions: Chromium

What is Chromium? Chromium is a naturally occurring element. It is the 21st most abundant element in the earth's crust.

Does Kitsap PUD test drinking water for the presence of Chromium? Yes. Chromium is regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act and all Group A Public Water Systems (those with 15 connections or more) are required to test periodically for the presence of Chromium.

What level of Chromium is allowed under the Safe Drinking Water Act? The Safe Drinking Water Act sets a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Chromium at 100 parts per billion. Laboratories are required to test for Chromium down to 7 parts per billion. To date, no sample taken by KPUD has tested above 7 parts per billion.

What is Chromium 6? Chromium 6 is a variant of Chromium. It is naturally occurring and also the product of industrial processes. In the movie *Erin Brockovich*, Chromium 6 was one contaminant associated with a case of groundwater contamination in California. In that instance Chromium 6 was detected at around 500 parts per billion.

Why was Chromium 6 recently in the news? As part of its ongoing oversight of the nation's drinking water, the US Environmental Protection Agency conducts periodic screening of "unregulated contaminants". Between 2013 and 2015 water systems across the country screened for a variety of unregulated contaminants, including Chromium 6. With this screening, labs were required to test for Chromium 6 down to 0.03 parts per billion. With this lower screening level, Chromium 6 was detected in the vast majority of samples submitted.

At what level was Chromium 6 detected in KPUD's system? KPUD's North Peninsula Water System participated in Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring in 2014 and 2015. Chromium 6 was detected at an average level of 1.2 parts per billion.

Where can I find more information on Chromium? Washington State Department of Health has posted information here: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/Contaminants/Chromium>
The US EPA has posted information here: <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/>

Kitsap's Water Year in Review

Water resource related information is frequently organized on a Water Year format. The "water year" runs from October 1 through the following September. It is designed to capture one full "wet" season (October through March) and one complete "dry" season (April through September). Water Year 2016 ended with September. In review:

Kitsap's wet season was marked by heavy precipitation and several large rain events. All rain monitoring stations recorded above average totals for the year. Some had record highs. Readings shown are in inches.

	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>2016</u>
KPUD Office	43	59
Kingston	32	46
Silverdale	47	57
South Kitsap	56	66
Holly	77	94

Streamflows were a bit slow to respond to early rains as watersheds had dried from the summer.

As the ground became saturated; however, stream flows increased and, over the winter, experienced several high flow events associated with large rainfalls. With summer, streams declined to relatively average summer flows.

While groundwater levels don't respond instantly to rainfall events, the above average rainfall totals bode well for our groundwater supplies. Aquifer levels followed a typical seasonal rise and fall: they go down in summer when there is no rain and people are using a lot of water (outdoor irrigation, mainly) and they come up in the winter (plenty of rain, no one is watering their lawn).

Additionally, routine monitoring of shoreline and deep aquifers showed no indications of seawater intrusion.

For more information on KPUD's hydrologic monitoring program visit our website at www.kpud.org.

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2017 Water Rates

On January 1, KPUD will make a few adjustments to our water rate structure. Adjustments will be made to:

Basic Service Charge: will increase from \$24/month to \$24.25/month.

Tier 3 Commodity Charge will increase from \$2.35 to \$2.40/100 cubic feet.*

Tier 4 Commodity Charge will increase from \$5.25 to \$5.50/100 cubic feet.*

*100 cubic feet equals 748 gallons.

No adjustments will be made to our Tiers 1 and 2 Commodity Charges.

2017 Rates shown below are for a typical residential service. Remember: KPUD bills on a bi-monthly basis.

Basic Service Charge

\$24.25 (monthly)

\$48.50 (per 2-month billing)

Commodity Charge

Tier 1 (0-1,400 cubic feet) \$1.15 per 100 cubic feet

Tier 2 (1,401—2,400 cubic feet) \$1.55 per 100 cubic feet

Tier 3 (2,401—4,000 cubic feet) \$2.40 per 100 cubic feet

Tier 4 (over 4,000 cubic feet) \$5.50 per 100 cubic feet