



Prudence Island Water District • PO Box 93 • Prudence Island, RI 02872

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## **REPEAT PUBLIC NOTICE – DRINKING WATER WARNING**

### **SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES IN PRUDENCE ISLAND WATER DISTRICT'S WATER SYSTEM**

### **BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING**

In September 2018 the Prudence Island Water District exceeded the Microbiological Maximum Contaminant Level standard. As our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. A routine sample taken from the storage tank on September 27, 2018 was positive for total coliform and E. coli. On October 1, 2018 a second sample was taken from the tank as well as Indian Spring Well #4, Army Camp Well, a home on Allen Lane, and a home on Pier Road. Indian Spring #4 and Army Camp wells were both absent of total coliform and absent of E. coli. The samples from the storage tank, home on Allen Lane and home on Pier Road were absent of E. coli, but all three contained total coliform. E. coli bacteria can make you sick and are especially a concern for people with weakened immune systems.

**This is a repeat Public Notice. Notices were also distributed on Oct. 5, 2018; Mar. 6, Jun. 8, Sep. 11, and Dec. 11, 2019; Mar. 7, May 28, Sep. 4, and Dec. 7, 2020; May 25, Aug. 28, and Dec. 10, 2021; and Feb. 23, Jun. 2, Sep. 1, 2022, Dec. 3, 2022 and Mar. 1, 2023.**

#### **What should I do? What does this mean?**

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one minute and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.
- E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Human pathogens in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a greater health risk for infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.
- The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice from their healthcare providers about drinking this water.

#### **What is being done?**

The District has conducted one hundred and forty-five (145) tests between November 11, 2018 and May 18, 2023. All 145 drinking water samples were confirmed by an independent laboratory to be absent of E. coli bacteria. Total coliform was detected in twelve (12) of these samples and confirmed by repeat sampling in six (6) instances.

During routine monitoring, if the presence of coliform is detected and confirmed by repeat sampling, the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) requires the District to hire an independent, certified contractor to perform a full assessment of the water system and identify possible causes of contamination. Since 2018, these assessments have identified: seasonal shut down of summer homes; lack of dedicated sample taps; IS#4 casing seal defect; faulty sample tap at AC well; missing backflow devices at IS wells; and improper disinfection during leak repair as the most likely causes of the contamination. Except for the last listed, for which a corrective action is in progress, all identified potential sources of contamination have been addressed by the PIWD.

In February 2019, the RIDOH and PIWD signed a Consent Order (3<sup>rd</sup> amended June 2022) to address the first listed potential cause of contamination (seasonal shut-down of houses). The RIDOH has determined that the PIWD has not achieved full compliance with the consent order and is mandating permanent chlorination and iron-manganese pre-treatment; corrective actions for which the PIWD has identified funds, engaged an engineer, and has recently received preliminary approval from RIDOH to proceed with project bidding and contractor selection. PIWD will remain on a boil water advisory until the treatment system is installed and approved by RIDOH, with notifications sent every three months until the boil water advisory is lifted by RIDOH.

For more information, please contact the District (401.683.0011; info@pih2o.org). General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by bacteria and other disease-causing organisms are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

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, guests, tenants, and short-term rentals). You can do this by posting this notice or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by Prudence Island Water District.  
DATE NOTICE ISSUED: June 3, 2023

State Water System ID#: RI1592023

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*Prudence Island Water District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*