

Public Information



CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

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For Immediate Release

Water Quality Notification— November 2, 2015

Rexburg, ID - The City of Rexburg wishes to apologize for any confusion that has been created over the weekend with respect to water quality in the city. Although Eastern Idaho Public Health issued a Temporary Water Advisory on Friday, it was intended for food service establishments, not the general public. While there has been much speculation as to the reasoning behind the standard for food service establishments, and why it doesn't apply to culinary water for general consumption, the simple answer is that the two systems are governed by different guidelines and have different standards. As the City, we were not involved in any decision to issue water use precautions, primarily because none of the current testing indicates that our water poses a risk to water users.

In the less than 72 hours since the City became aware of the concerns for food service establishments using our water, we have conducted additional testing, and received confirmation that our water is safe for consumption. The City is currently awaiting one more set of tests that we anticipate will likewise show the water quality to be good for consumption, at which time we also anticipate Eastern Idaho Public Health will rescind their Temporary Water Advisory for food service establishments.

The City's water system tested positive for excess Total Coliforms. This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified within 24 hours. Total coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves but a sign that there could be a problem with the supply or distribution system (pipes).

Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Rexburg samples 32 times at various locations per month, and during the last testing cycle, excess Total Coliforms were found in 3 of the 32 samples, which is one more than allowed. This was a warning of a potential problem.

Whenever we detect coliform bacteria in any sample, we do follow-up testing to see if other bacteria of greater concern, such as fecal coliform or E. coli, are present. We did not find any of these bacteria in our subsequent testing. If we had, we would have notified the general public immediately.

We have taken an additional set of tests for further verification that our water system is safe for consumption, and anticipate having the result tomorrow morning prior to lunch (11/3/15).

If you have questions, please contact Eastern Idaho Public Health at (208) 523-5382.

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