The Roxborough water system recently violated a drinking water requirement. Although this situation is not an emergency, 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 also want to assure you that if a water emergency were to occur, you would have been notified immediately by all possible forms of communications and been continuously updated until the water was returned to the quality standards, we ensure on a 24/7 basis.

Here’s what happened: At approximately noon on Saturday, June 6th, a small pipeline feeding chlorine to the finished, treated water at the water treatment plant, burst and interrupted the final disinfection of the water. The primary disinfection process at the water treatment plant, the ultraviolet (UV) system, was not affected, but the addition of chlorine to maintain residual disinfection was interrupted. The non-chlorinated water entered the clearwell where it mixed with the chlorinated water already stored, but over the next six hours the chlorine residual was diluted below the required concentration. The water treatment plant is equipped with a state-of-the-art alarm system, and several alarms were triggered by this interruption in chlorine feed. Unfortunately, the operator on duty negligently ignored those alarms, and appropriate disciplinary action was taken.

At approximately 6:00 p.m. an off-duty operator took the initiative to check the plant and found the problem. The pumps from the treatment plant to the distribution system were immediately shut down, the chlorine feed was switched to the backup system, and the chlorine dose was increased to ensure proper disinfection of the water stored at the plant. There was approximately a six-hour period during which the plant did not comply with the regulatory requirement for inactivation of viruses. The water sent to the distribution system during this six-hour period mixed with the chlorinated water already in the tanks and pipelines, and the water delivered to your homes and businesses remained safe. The chlorine residual was checked first thing the next day, and no indications of low chlorine residual were found in the distribution system or tanks.

What we’re doing to prevent it from happening again: There is nothing we take more seriously than the water quality delivered into your home. That’s why Roxborough is updating the process control system to automatically shut down the plant if the chlorine feed is interrupted for any reason. We are also implementing backup support for the on-call operator, so we always have more than one set of eyes on critical alarms.
Be assured the water in Roxborough remains safe. The following is provided to us by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) as standard language to be shared with each of our customers:

In order to ensure proper disinfection, after primary disinfection with UV water in the treatment plant must be in contact with chlorine or a similar disinfectant for a minimum amount of time. On June 6, 2020, we did not meet the minimum disinfection requirement. The UV system quickly kills most bacteria and parasites, chlorine is necessary to protect against organisms such as viruses. For this reason, water needs to mix with chlorine for a longer time period to kill such organisms.

NOTE: This advisory is NOT related to COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that the “Virus that causes COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water.” For additional information on COVID-19 and drinking water, you can refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s website: https://covid19.colorado.gov.

What does this mean? What should I do?

COVID-19 may represent an immediate health threat for high-risk people (i.e., over the age of 60 or people with chronic health conditions like heart, lung, kidney disease, or diabetes). High-risk populations should consult with their doctor about the relative risk of drinking tap water versus potential exposure to COVID-19 by purchasing bottled water. If you choose to use an alternative water source, consider purchasing bottled water from a company that delivers directly to your home or install a home treatment or point-of-use system (e.g., reverse osmosis system).

If you must leave your home to seek an alternative water source, such as to go to the store to purchase bottled water, due to the risk of COVID-19 exposure, we recommend that you practice social distancing. This includes staying six feet away from other people, wearing a protective face covering (e.g., surgical mask, homemade mask, bandana, scarf, etc.), and considering using credit cards, debit cards, or insta-pay services instead of cash for your purchases.

Additionally, please continue to follow good hygiene practices. For example, when you return from the store, wipe down any containers with soap and water and thoroughly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. To minimize possible COVID-19 exposure, please try to limit the number of trips out of your home.

○ Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. These symptoms are not only caused only by organisms in drinking water,
but also by other factors. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to consult your doctor.

- If you have an infant, severely compromised immune system, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your doctor about drinking this water. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by bacteria and other disease-causing organisms are available from EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

**What is being done?**

- This situation is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately.

- Roxborough immediately stopped pumping water to the distribution system when the problem was discovered, then switched to the backup chlorine system, and increased chlorine dose to return to proper disinfection. Roxborough is evaluating SCADA alarms, controls, and operator procedures to prevent a future recurrence.

The problem was resolved the evening of June 6, 2020, and the distribution system was sampled on June 7, 2020 and met all regulatory requirements. Additional control system programming and staff procedures will be implemented by June 30, 2020. For more information, please contact Barbara Biggs at barbara@roxwater.org or (303) 979-7286, or 6222 N Roxborough Park Rd.

*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 do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by: Roxborough Water and Sanitation District - CO0118055

Date distributed: **June 12, 2020.**

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email or call me.

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