

January 29, 2009

Dear Homeowner:

The Monmouth County Health Department (MCHD) is advising you that several private wells in the Indian Pointe development in Millstone were recently found to have elevated levels of sodium and chloride (salt).

The MCHD presented an overview of the ongoing investigation in the Indian Pointe development to the Millstone Township Committee on Wednesday January 21st. The presentation is posted on the Millstone Township website, and shows a map of the plume and other useful information, at http://www.millstone.nj.us/Indian_Pointe_Development.pdf . In addition, the MCHD's investigation and the impact that the sodium and chloride is having on homeowners in the Indian Pointe development is posted on the Examiner's website, at http://examiner.gmnews.com/news/2009/0129/front_page/002.html .

We are advising all homeowners in the neighborhood that discharge their backwash onto the ground from water conditioners or pools to direct these discharges at least 50 feet from their well head. Both these discharges contain sodium and chloride.

The backwash from the water conditioner will discharge 1 of 2 ways: either onto the ground, or into a septic system or drywell. The Well Construction and Maintenance Regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:9D-27) require a minimum distance of 50 feet between the well head and a septic system or dry well. But these regulations currently do not require a minimum distance that the discharge from the water softener or pool backwash should be from the well head when the backwash is discharged onto the ground. The backwash from pools usually discharges onto the ground, since septic systems are not usually designed to receive pool backwash.

This investigation was initiated when a homeowner from Indian Pointe contacted the MCHD about their water having a salty taste. Since then, ten residences throughout the development have been sampled for sodium, chloride, and nitrate. Four wells located near each other were elevated for either sodium or chloride; no wells had elevated nitrate levels (nitrate is an indicator of septic system contamination).

Under the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act (N.J.A.C. 7:10), both sodium and chloride are classified as secondary standards. Secondary standards have non-enforceable guidelines, and may cause cosmetic effects (such as skin or tooth discoloration), or aesthetic effects (such as taste, odor, or color) in drinking water. Although sodium is a secondary standard, it is considered significant for consumers requiring a low sodium diet. Chloride may corrode plumbing.

The MCHD will be conducting additional sampling to further define the area that is being impacted. Please contact Claire Condie at 732-431-7456 if you have any questions, want to schedule a water test, or if you have any information to offer that might assist in the ongoing investigation.

Sincerely,

William Simmons
Environmental Health Coordinator

cc: Jim Pickering, Millstone Township Administrator
Karen Fell, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water

John Shevlin, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
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