



City of Newport
Department of Utilities

PRESS RELEASE

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NOTICE

Drinking Water Tested Negative For Pharmaceuticals

The Newport Water Division has learned that Channel abc 6- WLNE TV recently had drinking water from the tap at five locations in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts tested for pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, and personal care products. The testing was in response to the recent Associated Press report related to drinking water and the presence of pharmaceuticals found in the tap water of some cities in the United States. The US EPA presently has not established standards for public drinking water for pharmaceuticals or personal care products and therefore testing is not required by water suppliers. To date, research has not demonstrated human health impacts from these compounds in drinking water.

Channel abc 6 tested tap water in Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, and New Bedford. A sample from each community was collected and sent to the Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa. The samples were analyzed for fifteen (15) compounds in nanograms per liter or parts per trillion (ppt). Newport Water Division was pleased to be contacted by Channel abc 6 on April 24th and learn that no pharmaceutical compounds were detected in our water or the water of the other communities tested. However in Newport caffeine (68 ppt) and cotinine (9.7 ppt) were detected. Cotinine is a metabolite or byproduct of nicotine as it is processed by the human body. The same compounds detected in Newport's water were also detected in low levels in Providence and New Bedford.

Although advanced technology has improved the ability to detect compounds at very low levels, the Newport Water Division reminds our customers that people regularly consume or expose themselves to the compounds in much higher concentrations through other sources. The Newport Water Division staff is committed to providing safe drinking water to all our customers.