



Township of South Orange Village

January 24, 2016

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

IMPORTANT SOUTH ORANGE WATER SYSTEM INFORMATION

Recently, news outlets have published articles discussing the presence of Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFCs), and one specific PFC, perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA), in public and private water systems in New Jersey and around the country. These articles include references to the South Orange "Meadowbrook Well" as having a test result which exceeded the guidance level.

The Village is issuing this release to provide important information to our residents regarding these issues, including (i) What are PFCs and PFOA, (ii) When did and what has the Village learned about this situation, and (iii) what we are doing in response to this information and what should residents do.

What are PFCs and PFOA?

Perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) refers to a group of man-made chemicals which are used in a number of industries for their water and heat resistant properties. Commonly known uses are Teflon and Scotchgard products. As a byproduct of manufacturing processes using PFCs, they can be released into the environment.

Some studies have found adverse health effects resulting from exposure to PFCs. However, PFCs are NOT currently a regulated chemical by either the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). As a result, public water systems have not been required to conduct regular testing for the presence of PFCs. Additional and more detailed information about PFCs, including PFOA, can be found on the DEP website at the link below, as well as in a number of additional sources for which links are found at the end of the below DEP web page:

http://www.nj.gov/health/eohs/pfc_in_drinkingwater.shtml

When and What Has the Village Learned at this Time?

The Village first became aware of the overall PFC issue, including specifically the test result on the South Orange well, last week as a result of a telephone call from a DEP Assistant Director in the DEP Water Operations Element. At that time the Village first learned about PFCs, including the fact that they are not a regulated contaminant, and that the EPA and DEP have been studying PFCs for at least the past 10 years, including water sampling and scientific research to determine whether PFCs should be regulated and, if so, what would be the appropriate regulatory limits.

We also learned at that time and in the past week that, in connection with those ongoing studies, the EPA developed Provisional Health Advisory levels protective for **short-term** exposures to **PFOA** of 400 parts per trillion (ppt) or (ng/L). The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) developed a guideline for **chronic (lifetime)** exposures to **PFOA** of 40 ppt (ng/L).

We also learned that the EPA has required public water systems to conduct investigatory testing for PFCs to provide the EPA information with the necessary data to evaluate the presence of PFCs throughout the country, the detected levels, and develop possible regulatory limits. In that process, the EPA required the EOWC to conduct such tests and we learned this week that a test of the raw ground water from South Orange's Well #17 resulted in a PFOA level of 58 ppt, which, while substantially lower than the EPA short term Advisory level of 400 ppt, exceeded the DEP guideline for lifetime exposure of 40 ppt. Prior to last week the Village had not been notified or advised by either the EOWC or the DEP of the testing of Well #17 or of the results. We are currently investigating how and why we had no prior notice. It is important to note that the test result was of 100% raw source water directly from Well #17. However, the Well #17 water is not directly distributed to any consumer and rather is introduced into the system where it is blended with other water from EOWC. In fact, the Well #17 water represents only about 10% of the water introduced into the system. Moreover, the other water sources representing 90% of the water in our system did not have any PFOA test results exceeding any limits. As a result, the blended water in our system ultimately delivered to consumers likely did not have PFOA levels exceeding any limits.

As most residents are undoubtedly aware, since 1996, the Village's water operations and water supply have been the responsibility of the East Orange Water Commission (EOWC). As a result of the unacceptable performance by EOWC under that contract, the Village has elected not to renew that contract and will be resuming control of our water system effective January 1, 2017.

What are We Doing Now and What Should Residents Do?

The Village is continuing to review the history of this situation to ensure that we are promptly notified of any testing or other issues affecting our water quality. We have also contacted the

only laboratory certified to test for PFOA and we are arranging for independent ongoing testing of Well #17. We are working with our consultants to determine the current blending levels and any remedial actions needed. We will continue to investigate all aspects of this situation and will keep residents informed as those efforts progress.

Residents are encouraged to review the resources at the link above. As noted, the Well #17 water represents only about 10% of the water introduced into the distribution system and it is blended with other non-contaminated water prior to delivery to any consumer. As a result, the water actually delivered to consumers likely has PFOA levels below the guidance limits. In addition, the one test result, 58 ppt, was only about 14% of the US EPA Public Health Advisory limit of 400 ppt for short term exposures. It did exceed the NJ DEP guideline of 40 ppt, but that is for chronic or lifetime exposure.

As noted in the DEP web page materials, PFCs cannot be boiled out of water or removed with typical residential grade water filters. As a result, any resident who remains concerned should consider using bottled water for drinking and cooking.