

10/18/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

City of La Junta Water System, ID#CO0145420
Public Notice of Backflow Testing Assembly Failure.

Summary

The City of La Junta is committed to providing customers with safe, reliable drinking water and being open and transparent with information about your drinking water. The City of La Junta water system has violated a drinking water requirement. This situation is not an emergency, and has been resolved. However, we are still notifying you of the situation.

The City of La Junta Water System received 2 violations from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) during our most recent sanitary survey (system inspection) on Tuesday, August 29 2023. The CDPHE violation notification was received electronically on Thursday, September 28 2023.

The first violation was for backflow assemblies that failed their test and had not been repaired by the property owner within the allotted 90-day window allowed for repairs.

The second violation was for additional devices that were not properly recorded during the 2022 calendar year.

Cross Connection Control/Backflow Assembly

A backflow prevention assembly prevents back pressure or siphonage from a water source known as cross connections from occurring, thereby preventing contaminants or disease-causing organisms from entering the drinking water, which can cause diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches. Backflow prevention assemblies are required to be tested annually. When these assemblies are not tested in a calendar year, they must be tested within 90 days of being active in the next year or request an alternative compliance schedule from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Who is impacted

The City of La Junta Water Department provides treated water to its customers and to three consecutive water systems: Bent's Fort Water, Homestead Loop, Swink.

What happened

Of the 412 backflow assemblies in our water system that require annual testing, there were 27 that did not meet the 90-day requirement. Since the notice of violation from the CDPHE on September 28th, only six remain untested. The La Junta Water Department makes every effort to avoid shutting off water service to these important public service locations. The water quality violations resulted when these 27 connections were not protected within the required timelines and these property and business owners did not correct the issues.

What steps were taken to correct the issue

The deficient devices will be tested by the property owners prior to November 16th, 2023, or their water service will be suspended until such testing is completed satisfactorily. This testing or suspension of service will resolve the violation.

In addition to the multiple notifications already provided to these customers, the La Junta Water Department will increase the frequency with which it reviews customer compliance data, offer cross-connection control services to non-compliant customers, and initiate suspension of service for those customers that fail to comply prior to the 120-day regulatory deadline. We will annually evaluate the tracking, enforcement, and reporting processes for the backflow program, and will make changes accordingly. This increased oversight and management should prevent this situation from reoccurring.

Did this impact drinking water quality

The La Junta Water Department constantly monitors water quality throughout our system, and our testing and records indicate that your drinking water was not impacted as a result of the 6 non-compliant connections.

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.

Please contact Chris Menges, Water Quality Technician and Backflow Control Specialist (chris.menges@lajuntacolorado.org) or Tom Seaba, Director of Water and Wastewater (tom.seaba@lajuntacolorado.org), with any questions or concerns.



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