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# PORT WASHINGTON WATER DISTRICT

38 Sandy Hollow Road • PO Box 432  
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516.767.0171 • [www.pwwd.org](http://www.pwwd.org)

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## Chromium-6 (Hexavalent Chromium) and Drinking Water Concerns Fact Sheet

### **No Long Island Water Provider Exceeds the EPA standard of 100 ppb**

- The EPA sets national drinking water standards and established a limit for total chromium of 100 parts per billion (ppb) in 1991 based on the best available science at the time. The total chromium limit includes all forms of chromium (e.g., chromium-3 and chromium-6). No Long Island Water provider exceeds the EPA standard of 100 ppb.
- Our chromium test results ranged from below detection limits to 3.90 ppb with an average of 0.80 ppb. These results are lower than the total chromium standard, so there are no special actions our district or customers need to take.
- **The state of California has set a more stringent standard for total chromium;** the California enforceable limit for total chromium is 50 ppb.
- If a water system exceeds the established limit, customers must be notified and the system must take action to address the high levels.
- Suffolk County-wide statistics average around 0.431 ppb of Chromium-6
- Nassau County averages at 0.338 ppb

### **What is chromium and how does it get into drinking water?**

- Chromium is an odorless and tasteless metallic element. It is found naturally in rocks, plants and soil, and it is also found in humans and animals.
- There are two common forms of chromium:

Chromium-3 is an essential human dietary element found in vegetable, meats, fruits, grains and yeast. Chromium-3 can be found in most multi-vitamins.

Chromium-6 (also known as hexavalent chromium) can be generated from natural deposits of chromium in soils, as well as produced by industrial processes such as steel manufacturing and pulp mills.



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### **What about the California Public Health Goal for chromium-6?**

- California adopted a Public Health Goal (PHG) of 0.02 parts per billion for chromium-6 in July 2011. This is a state-specific goal and does not impact the rest of the country.

### **What does it mean if the results for my water system show chromium-6 levels over the California Public Health Goal?**

- Having chromium-6 levels above California's Public Health Goal of 0.02 parts per billion does not mean that you should be concerned about the quality of your water. A Public Health Goal is a health-protective level of a contaminant in drinking water that California's public water systems should strive to achieve if it is technically and economically feasible. Other water industry professionals are currently working with EPA to determine if it is possible to treat for chromium-6 to such a low level, and if so, how much it would cost to do so.

### **What about home water treatment devices and bottled water?**

- Water provided by our district is already lower than the total chromium standard, so there are no special actions that our customers need to take.
- Regulations for chromium in bottled water (which are enforced by the Food and Drug Administration) also include a standard of 100 ppb for total chromium, just like drinking water. Bottled water manufacturers may have specific information on chromium-6 levels for their products.

### **Will the EPA be revising the total chromium limit or setting a standard for chromium-6?**

- That is yet to be determined. The EPA regularly reviews drinking water standards as new science becomes available and is currently reviewing new chromium-6 health effects information.
- Once the review is completed, the EPA will carefully review the conclusions and consider all relevant information to determine whether the drinking water standard for total chromium needs to be updated or if a new standard for chromium-6 is needed.
- The drinking water industry is working with the EPA to review all relevant information on chromium-6 including health effects, occurrence and treatment options. This work will help support the EPA in its decision-making process.
- The EPA has posted information about chromium in drinking water at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/chromium.cfm>, and additional information on chromium-6 at: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/chromium/index.cfm>



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- More information on the federal regulation development process is available at <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/regulatingcontaminants/index.cfm>
- It is also possible that some states might develop their own standard for chromium-6. California has already begun the process of developing a standard (more information on their efforts is available at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/drinkingwater/Pages/Chromium6.aspx>)

All results of our water quality testing are presented to our residents in our annual drinking water quality report and our tap water remains to be of the highest quality possible and safe to drink. For additional information, please visit the UPSEPA's website at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), or contact the Port Washington Water District at 516.767.0171 or at [info@pwwd.org](mailto:info@pwwd.org).

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