**Town of Laytonsville Water Safety Information**

Since mid-September, our water utility agency, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, has provided Laytonsville reports of periodic tests of free chlorine levels at sixteen locations in and near the incorporated town. The reported results of those tests are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Address** | **Free Cl2 12/05/23** | **Free Cl2 10/31/23 & 11/01/23** | **Free Cl2 10/04/23** | **Free Cl2 09/13/23** |
| Air Park Tank (20511 Woodfield Rd) | 0.89 | 1.01 | 0.98 | 0.51 |
| 7401 Warfield Rd | 0.88 | 1.08 | 0.80 | 0.51 |
| 6819 Warfield Rd | 0.89 | 1.24 | 0.88 | 0.28 |
| Laytonsville Tank (6819 Warfield Rd) | 0.86 | 1.24 | 0.92 | 0.34 |
| 6910 Howard St | 0.49 | 0.83 | 0.26 | 0.12 |
| 7407 White House Ln | 0.88 | 1.11 | 0.77 | 0.21 |
| 7200 Brink Rd | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.03 |
| 6806 Sunset Dr | 0.88 | 1.12 | 0.62 | 0.21 |
| 6641 Maple Knoll Dr | 0.84 | 1.22 | 0.34 | 0.21 |
| 6820 Maple Knoll Dr | 0.74 | 0.73 | 0.68 | 0.20 |
| 263 Barberry Ln | 0.82 | 1.02 | 0.70 | 0.21 |
| 21320 Birdie Ln | 0.31 | 1.02 | 0.49 | 0.01 |
| 6532 Garden Grove Way | 0.48 | 0.99 | 0.04 | 0.02 |
| 6134 Olney Laytonsville Rd (to the west) | 0.71 | 0.75 | 0.41 | 0.05 |
| 6134 Olney Laytonsville Rd (to the east) | 0.58 | 0.74 | 0.36 | 0.04 |
| 21230 Cracklin Rd | 0.31 | 0.49 | 0.35 | 0.03 |

The test results show fluctuations in free chlorine levels in the water and, happily, a reduction in the number of locations where those levels did not reach the minimum proportion sought by the utility to assure the water’s safety for consumption.

At its March 28, 2023, community meeting the utility explained that it seeks to maintain a minimum free chlorine level in its water of at least 0.1 milligram/liter. That minimum desired level of chlorination was stated on image 8 of WSSC’s [March 28 power-point presentation](https://www.wsscwater.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/Laytonsville%20March%202023%20update.pdf). The mid-September test results showed six of the sixteen reporting stations in and around Laytonsville with free chlorine levels below that safety threshold, the early October tests showed two station below that level, and the tests taken on the last day of October and the first day of November and on December 5 showed just one location with an inadequate chlorine result.

After receiving the September report, I wrote to WSSC to express concern about the safety of the water the utility was providing to the town. The utility responded on October 12 with the following explanation of how it assures the safety of its water when free chlorine levels are low, making specific reference to measures it has taken in Laytonsville:

*WSSC Water maintains chlorine residual throughout our distribution system and takes a series of mitigation steps when the chlorine is low. The large distribution mains (required for fire suppression) and low population density in some locations in Laytonsville, specifically at dead-ends, has posed a unique challenge in maintaining the chlorine residual. To that end, we have installed an automatic flushing device to better move stagnant water through the area, have re-routed water via a flow control valve, and have contracted with an outside engineering firm to propose long-term solutions.*

*We can be certain that the drinking water is safe from microbial contamination if the free residual chlorine levels are above 0.1 mg/L, though chlorine below that level does not mean the water is unsafe. If the free chlorine is below 0.1 mg/L, we conduct an additional microbial test, known as a heterotrophic plate count (HPC), to check for the presence of microbial activity, to better understand the potential risk posed by low chlorine. We conducted HPCs throughout the summer in Laytonsville, any time a hydrant tested below 0.1 mg/L for free chlorine. Analytical results indicated that the low chlorine is not leading to concerning microbial growth. Additionally, we have tested the drinking water directly from about 30 homes in the area. The in-home testing included checking for the presence of E. coli and total coliforms, and none were detected.*

*We agree that the persistently low chlorine should be carefully monitored and addressed, and we continue to work through the possible solutions listed above. We also will continue to check chlorine throughout the area.*

On December 12 WSSC engineers met on site with me, the town’s engineering consultant, and other concerned citizens to discuss and plan improvements to the structures the utility has installed to improve water quality in the Birdie Lane area. I am hopeful that these discussions will lead to enhanced water service in that part of the town.

Charles Hendricks

Mayor

December 19, 2023