

# Dutchess County Department of Health

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Report Shows Significant Decline in MTBE Levels in Dutchess County Public Water Supplies**

**Poughkeepsie...** The Dutchess County Department of Health (DCDOH) has issued a report summarizing the significant decline in methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) levels in Dutchess County public water supplies over the past decade. MTBE was used as a gasoline blending component until it was banned in New York State in 2004. The downward trend in MTBE levels illustrates the positive impact of New York State drinking water regulations and DCDOH monitoring efforts, as well as improvements in gasoline regulations.

“Drinking water safety is a critical priority for Dutchess County. Our extensive water monitoring data shows an encouraging downward trend of MTBE contamination over the past thirteen years,” said Commissioner of Health Kari Reiber, MD.

The Dutchess County Department of Health monitors close to 700 public water systems countywide as a regulatory agency enforcing New York State’s Sanitary Code as well as Dutchess County’s sanitary code. The report reviews the results of sampling since 2000, and includes the following findings:

- MTBE has not been found in detectable levels in any surface water sources (e.g., reservoir intakes) ever sampled in Dutchess County.
- Detectable but declining levels of MTBE have been found in a portion of samples taken from public water supply wells fed by groundwater.
- The average concentration of MTBE detected in public water supply wells sampled in Dutchess County decreased by 96%, from a high of 0.024 mg/L in 2000 to a low of 0.001 mg/L in 2013.
- The maximum MTBE concentration declined by 98% from 3.80 mg/L in 2003 to 0.09 mg/L in 2013.

- Since 2005, following the elimination of MTBE in gasoline, no **new** public water supplies have been found to have MTBE contamination above the MCL and by 2013, only 7 out of 109 supplies sampled for MTBE had concentrations above 0.01 mg/L.
- **No** private wells were found to have MTBE above the maximum contaminant level in the private well testing study conducted between 2007 and 2009.

Test samples analyzed in the report were taken prior to the process of treatment and filtration, and therefore represent a conservative estimate of potential exposure. Treatment and filtration requirements help ensure water accessed by consumers is safe for drinking consumption.

Public water supplies sampling test requirements, including test frequency, are determined by NYS Sanitary Code Subpart 5-1. Water supplies found to be within one half of the MCL are subject to more frequent sampling requirements. Private well water supplies are not subject to NYS Sanitary Code testing regulations; residents with private wells should test their water supply periodically and review the results with experts.

The MTBE trend report is part of the DCDOH's continuing efforts to educate and inform residents about drinking water safety. The **Trend Report on MTBE in Public Water Supplies**, along with other resources about water quality monitoring, can be found on the DCDOH's "Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment" webpage at <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Health/22609.htm>.

Direct link the Trend Report:

[http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Health/MTBE\\_Trend\\_Report\\_Final\\_v4.pdf](http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Health/MTBE_Trend_Report_Final_v4.pdf)

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