

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



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Residents of Las Cruces Trailer Park Advised to Boil Water

(Santa Fe, NM) – Today the New Mexico Environment Department’s Drinking Water Bureau and the New Mexico Department of Health’s Office of Epidemiology advised the Johnson Trailer Park Water System in Las Cruces to issue a boil water advisory to citizens served by the water system.

Approximately 250 residents of the Johnson Trailer Park and customers of the Johnson Trailer Park Water System are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing. State officials required the boil water advisory due to bacteriological contamination. Routine laboratory results from water samples taken June 28, indicated Total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria at one point in the water system that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). One of four follow-up samples taken June 29 indicated the presence of Total coliform bacteria.

The presence of Total coliform or *E. coli* in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of the bacteria are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for the bacteria in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of *E. coli*. The more dangerous strains of *E.coli*, often associated with contaminated food and water, may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness from these more dangerous strains.

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The NMED has asked the operators of the water system to work with the Rural Water Association to identify potential causes for the bacterial contamination and assistance to fix them. The NMED will continue to monitor the Johnson Trailer Park Water System and to provide technical assistance, including supplemental testing at the request of the water system board.

Residents who have immediate health concerns related to this water quality issue should consult their health care provider. For more health-related information relating to bacteriological contamination in drinking water, residents may refer to the Center for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/health/foodill.htm, or call the Department of Health, Environmental Health Epidemiology Program at (505) 827-0006. The Environment Department and Department of Health will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue.

For more information regarding the status of the water system, contact Richard Thompson, Hydrologist, NMED, at (505) 647-7955, or Cathy Tyson-Foster, Communications Dir., NMED, at (505) 827-0314.

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