



**Salmon River Central School District Fact Sheet**  
**Fort Covington (T), Franklin County**

**UPDATE — DRINKING WATER SUPPLY MONITORING RESULTS**

**Summary**

Recent testing of the Salmon River Central School District's (School's) water supply indicates that acetone (an organic compound associated with a previous spill at the School) is present in the treated water at levels below the New York State standard set for public drinking water supplies. The levels of acetone that have been found in the treated water do not represent a health concern. However, as a precautionary measure, the School voluntarily decided to provide faculty, staff and students bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes starting March 6, 2013. As a temporary measure, the School will improve the maintenance and monitoring of its current water treatment system to address the presence of acetone in the water supply system. The School will also implement a long-term improvement project to upgrade their water treatment system and to ensure water continues to meet all drinking water standards.

**Background**

In January 2011 the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) was notified of a spill, which occurred in November 2010, of an ethanol-based solution used in the School's geothermal heating and cooling systems. The spill occurred during the course of a construction project that included work on the geothermal heating system. DEC took immediate steps to conduct air, soil and groundwater sampling, and required the installation of ventilation in the crawl space below the school as an interim remedial measure to ensure the health and safety of the students and faculty in the elementary school. This interim remedial measure was completed before the start of school in September 2011, as well as the installation of a vapor barrier under the elementary wing, the installation of additional groundwater monitoring wells and sampling of soil beneath the crawlspace. Under the terms of an Order on Consent, the School is responsible for continuing the implementation of existing interim remedial measures and for implementing additional interim and long-term remedial measures.

The School's drinking water is supplied by its own well source and is regulated as a public water system. The well source is disinfected with chlorine and has multiple treatment systems to improve the aesthetic quality of the water before it is used. The treated water is tested regularly for a variety of contaminants and sampling results show the water meets all drinking water standards. As a result of the ethanol spill, the DEC required testing of pre-treated water at the School.

A sample collected on January 31, 2013, showed the presence of acetone in the raw water sample collected prior to treatment. Following the analysis of the samples and receipt of the results, the School notified DEC staff on February 28. Prior to this sampling event, no environmental contaminants had been detected in the School's water supply. Acetone is a byproduct of the breakdown of ethanol, which is present in the soil and groundwater as a result of the spill. Ethanol has not been detected in water

supply samples. After receiving these results, the School has tested the water on a more frequent basis and at additional locations. The results of subsequent sampling show that although acetone is present in the raw and treated water, the levels are below the standard set for public drinking water supplies (50 parts per billion).

### **Human Exposure Assessment**

On its own accord, the School has decided to provide faculty, staff and students bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes starting March 6, 2013. The School's water supply is still being used for a variety of other purposes, including hand washing, showering, and filling the School's swimming pool. The levels of acetone in the treated water are below the New York State standard set for public drinking water supplies (50 parts per billion). The levels of acetone that have been found in the treated water do not represent a health concern for either short-term or long-term exposure from drinking the water, direct contact with the water, incidental ingestion during swimming, or the inhalation of acetone that may volatilize from the water.

### **Next Steps**

- The water supply will continue to be treated and tested to confirm that the levels of acetone remain below the New York State standard set for public drinking water supplies, if detected at all.
- The School will replace the activated carbon in the carbon filtration units and perform ongoing maintenance of the existing water treatment system. In addition, the School will design and construct a temporary measure to remove acetone from the finished water with the goal of completing this improvement in April 2013.
- The School will implement a long-term improvement project to upgrade their water treatment system and to ensure water continues to meet all drinking water standards.
- Although the water supply is suitable for use, the School has opted to provide bottled water to faculty, staff and students to use for drinking and cooking purposes until acetone is not detected in the treated water.
- The School, with DEC oversight and in accordance with a DEC-approved work plan (January 2013), will install a soil venting/vapor extraction system and implement enhanced in-situ bioremediation of groundwater to remediate contamination in soil, groundwater and soil vapor. DEC has directed the School to implement the 2013 approved remedial action plan. The School's goal is to complete the installation of the soil venting/vapor extraction system by April 7, 2013.

### **Additional Information**

Any questions related to possible health issues may be directed to Susan Kennedy of the New York State Department of Health at 518-891-1800. For remediation information, contact DEC's Russell Huyck at 518-897-1200. Additional information regarding this effort is available at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/> and <http://www.health.ny.gov>.