

Checklist: Press Release for Detection of Unregulated Contaminant

DRINKING WATER RISK COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

If you want to prepare a press release or communicate with the media about a recent detection of an unregulated contaminant, coordinate with MDH and be prepared with the following information:

- Utility's contact person/spokesperson
 - Name
 - Contact information
 - Best way to contact
 - Best hours to contact
 - Additional contacts or after-hours contacts
- Information on the contaminant
 - Name (provide pronunciation key)
 - What it is (example: pesticide, personal care product, industrial chemical, etc.)
- Situational information
 - When the contaminant was detected
 - How the contaminant was detected (example: a noticeable change in water quality, routine monitoring, special monitoring event, etc.)
 - How the contaminant entered the drinking water system
 - Geographical area affected
 - Agency in charge of the situation and other partners working to resolve the situation
 - Actions being taken to monitor or resolve the situation
- Health and safety information
 - Known health effects if people drink the water
 - Distinguish between acute and chronic effects
 - Populations at risk
 - Recommended actions for customers
- When more information will be available

Adapted from Risk Communication Strategy and Tools: Guidelines for Communicating About Drinking Water Contaminants; Water Research Foundation, US EPA, Drinking Water Inspectorate (UK). 2010.