

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Commissioner



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DWS Circular Letter #2015-11

To: Surface Water Public Water Systems

From: Lori Mathieu, Public Health Section Chief, Drinking Water Section 

Date: August 31, 2015

Subject: No-cost Cyanotoxin Testing Available to Public Water Systems that Utilize Active Surface Water Reservoirs

The Department of Public Health, Drinking Water Section (DWS) is asking all surface water public water systems to participate in no-cost analysis of surface water samples to test for the presence of two cyanotoxins (microcystin and cylindrospermopsin) that are the subject of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent health advisory: [EPA Cyanotoxin Health Advisory](#). The information obtained from the testing will establish a basis for future testing and any additional protective measures. In addition, the DWS is requesting current program information from systems that presently test for cyanotoxins - specifically a program summary that highlights the frequency, duration and location of testing, historic concerns, and the current action plan to address issues. This information will assist the DPH as we continue to work with our surface water systems concerning the EPA Health Advisory. You may submit this information to DPH.SourceProtection@ct.gov.

The DWS has worked with the DPH State Public Health Laboratory to offer an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) to test for microcystin and cylindrospermopsin. In an effort to assess and address potential future cyanotoxin occurrences, all surface water PWSs are being asked to take up to three samples representative of the water column (for example, epilimnion, thermocline and hypolimnion) at each of their respective surface water treatment plant intakes. If a drinking water surface water source has multiple intakes, please differentiate the locations when submitting samples. A PWS may elect to have the sets of three intake samples remain anonymous. If a PWS chooses anonymity, the specific PWS may assign a unique identification code to the three samples in a manner that is solely identifiable to that system. This identification will be known only to the PWS, and will not serve any identification purposes to the DWS. The anonymous results will be emailed to all surface water PWSs.

Should a utility wish to submit more than the three samples for each intake (whether anonymous or not), the DPH lab is willing to accept up to seven additional raw water source samples. These additional samples should be linked to a water system and source (i.e. not anonymous). **All samples taken would be raw water evaluation samples and not applicable or relevant to the recently issued Environmental Protection Agency advisory levels.**



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Please visit <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3139&q=438906> for the State Public Health Laboratory sampling instructions, sample bottle information and submittal forms, as well as additional information regarding harmful algal blooms and cyanotoxins.

We thank you in advance for your participation and look forward to continuing to work with you concerning the presence of cyanotoxins in our state surface water drinking water supplies. If you have any further questions, please contact Kimberly Wholean at (860)509-7333.

CC: Ellen Blaschinski, Branch Chief – DPH Regulatory Services Branch
Local Health Directors