The Importance of Communication Procedures between Local Health Officials and Water Utilities

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ATCAVE – February 23, 2010

Regional Water Authority

City of New Haven
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Public Health Partnership

- USEPA develops water standards.
- CTDPH enforces water standards.
- Local Experts
  - Local Health Agencies
  - Fire Departments
  - Consumers.

- RWA delivers the required quantity & quality of water at the tap.

Regional Water Authority

Communication Opportunities

- Service Interruptions
- Cross Connection Control – Enforcement / Training
- Emergency Preparedness – Weather / Pandemics (Closed POD)
- Source Protection Efforts – unregulated discharges, vehicle accidents
- Geographic Definition of Public Water vs. Private wells areas
- Various Community Issues – Newhallville PAHs/Pb; Cheshire TCE
- General WQ Data via annual Consumer Confidence Reports

Examples of RWA – New Haven HD Communication Interaction

- RWA's Incident Command System (ICS)
- Seated partner in New Haven's EOC
- Recognition of RWA as a component of "Critical Infrastructure" by NHHD and CTDEMHS Region 2 = establishment of a Closed POD at RWA for medication availability
- Participation in various Table Top Exercises
- Quarterly Meetings to discuss Topics of Interest

Service Interruption

- Service Interruption Examples
  - Main Failures
  - Service Replacements – Main Relocation (scheduled)
  - Distribution System Failures – Power Related / Booster Pumps
  - Potential Deliberate Contamination Event
- Information Health Departments will be looking for:
  - define extent of area impacted
  - planned activities and anticipated return to service
  - bottled water availability if appropriate – Critical Consumers ?
  - analytical support
- Anticipate Health Department interaction w/licensed businesses – Food Service
- RWA follows procedures outlined in our ICS
  - Contact Lists (include after-hours)
  - Notification Requirements – RWA-SOP “Notification of Public Health Agencies for Public Water Supply Emergencies” in accordance with CTPHC Section 19-13-B46
  - Notification Forms

Benefits of Good Pro-Active Communications

- Increased Efficiency – avoid decision making paralysis
- Relaxed time to Work / Think through the details of an event
- Avoidance of conflicts among your team mid-event
- Results in a positive, constructive incident response
- Establishment of a trusting relationship among agencies through staff familiarities
- Coordinated response to public / media