

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 8, 2018

Contact:
Kim Biggs (IEPA) – 217-558-1536
Don Bolger (DCHD) – 630-221-7374

Illinois EPA and DuPage County Health Department to Identify Private Drinking Water Wells Near Sterigenics for Sampling *Water Sampling Plan Under Development to Identify Possible Well Contamination*

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Director Alec Messina and DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) Executive Director Karen Ayala today announced their coordinated effort to identify private wells used for drinking water at homes near the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook. This is in response to the concerns of residents and local officials of possible groundwater contamination of ethylene glycol from the facility in 2013 and emissions of ethylene oxide. Currently, U.S. EPA has not provided guidance for groundwater analysis for ethylene glycol or ethylene oxide. Therefore, Illinois EPA has established a groundwater health advisory level specific to this sampling exercise. While the potential for contamination appears to be low, a targeted number of drinking water wells will be tested for these chemicals. Illinois EPA and DCHD are taking this important step to ensure the health of residents with these wells near Sterigenics facilities.

“Illinois EPA has listened to the questions and concerns of residents and local officials in Willowbrook and the surrounding area and is committed to conducting private well sampling to provide answers,” said Director Messina.

Beginning November 13, Health Department staff will contact homeowners within a one-mile area of Sterigenics to confirm homes with private wells are used for drinking water and ask for permission to collect a sample for testing. Once the wells are identified, Illinois EPA will determine which wells will be sampled. The sampling plan may be expanded outside this area if initial sampling identifies contamination. The sampling and analysis of groundwater from the private wells will be done at **NO COST TO HOMEOWNERS**.

“Residents want to know if their well water is safe to drink, and so do we. We are working with Illinois EPA to learn as quickly as possible if private wells have been contaminated by ethylene glycol or ethylene oxide,” added Karen Ayala, Executive Director of the DuPage County Health Department.

2/DuPage County Private Well Sampling

Residents with wells will need to complete an access agreement to allow the collection of a sample from their wells. If residents are not home, an information packet will be left at the front door. In addition, DCHD will send letters to identified property owners, and an online survey and agreement have been developed for residents to provide the necessary information about their private wells, and to allow samples to be taken.

Once the drinking water wells are verified, the water sampling plan will be finalized by Illinois EPA staff. That plan could include up to 200 private wells. Illinois EPA staff will return to the selected homes where access agreements have been completed to take samples. All water samples will be sent to an independent certified laboratory for analysis. The independent sampling and analysis will provide additional information for residents and assist Illinois EPA in identifying groundwater contamination of wells used for drinking water in the area.

Once sampling results are received from the laboratory, the data will be provided to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), who will provide the sampling results to each of the residents once the results are finalized.

If the groundwater has been contaminated, Illinois EPA officials will share and discuss the information with the Illinois Attorney General's Office. Illinois EPA continues to work cooperatively with the Attorney General's Office to further the case. Both offices are committed to bringing meaningful relief to Willowbrook and surrounding communities.

###