EPA Desk Statement for Hotline Use - 4-methylcyclohexane methanol Release in Charleston, WV

1. EPA continues to work closely with other Federal and State agencies in West Virginia as they begin implementing a plan for getting the water system back on-line. The State of West Virginia and the West Virginia American Water Company (WVAWC) are developing a plan for flushing the system, along with sampling and analysis, that will allow residents to begin using their water as soon as possible. State and Federal (ATSDR/CDC) health officials have agreed that a level of 1 part per million (ppm) of methylcyclohexanemethanol is protective of public health and the State/WVAWC will use the flushing process to assure that and the 1 ppm level is achieved throughout the system. The EPA supports this approach and has offered sampling and monitoring assistance to the State during the restart efforts. (Sunday, Jan. 12)

2. About MCHM :
4-methylcyclohexane was one of more than 60,000 chemicals in commerce when the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) was passed in 1976. The 1976 statute, while imposing some information requirements for new chemicals entering the market, "grandfathered" in existing chemicals, and thus provided EPA with very limited ability to require testing on those existing chemicals to determine if they are safe. EPA continues to support much needed legislative reform to ensure that the Agency has updated authority to more effectively assess and regulate potentially harmful chemicals. (earlier in the week)

3. EPA continues to work closely with other Federal and State agencies in West Virginia as they begin implementing a plan for getting the water system back on-line. As those efforts are already underway, EPA is also examining state and federal response authorities associated with the incident to determine next steps and the environmental laws and regulations applicable to the facility. This review will help inform EPA's activities going forward. (Tuesday, Jan. 14)

You can contact the West Virginia American Water Company 24 hours a day at 1-800-685-8660 or visit the company's website at www.westvirginiaamwater.com.

Also, West Virginia American Water Company identifies in which areas the "Do Not Use" water ban has been lifted on its website at www.westvirginiaamwater.com and click on "Kanawha Valley Water Safety Map".