To: Parent, Suzanne[Parent.Suzanne@epa.gov]
From: Isales, Lydia
Sent: Tue 1/14/2014 9:26:07 PM
Subject: FW: WV - State of Emergency Declared 8 counties- CHEMICAL SPILL

From: Mulkey, Marcia
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2014 8:14 PM
To: Ajl, Diane; Gray, Heather; Field, Stephen; Jamieson, Cheryl
Cc: Isales, Lydia; bigioni, neil
Subject: Fw: WV - State of Emergency Declared 8 counties- CHEMICAL SPILL
Importance: High

From: Ferrell, Mark
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2014 7:54:14 PM
To: Garvin, Shawn
Cc: Early, William; Ryan, Daniel; R3 DIRECTORS; R3 Deputies; R3 C2s; Colip, Matthew; Crane, Rebecca
Subject: WV - State of Emergency Declared 8 counties- CHEMICAL SPILL

The chemical that leaked into the river from Freedom Industries was 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, DEP spokesman Tom Aluise said.

Freedom Industries produces "freeze conditioning agents, dust control palliatives, flotation reagents [and] water treatment polymers," among other chemicals, according to its website.

http://www.wvgazette.com/News/201401090044

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Residents in Charleston and surrounding counties were told Thursday evening not to drink, cook with or wash with water supplied by West Virginia American Water, following a leak earlier in the day at a chemical facility along the Elk River.

Any water supplied by West Virginia American Water in Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Jackson and Lincoln counties was to be used only for flushing toilets and putting out fires.

Hours after water company officials said their treatment facility - which is near the leak site on the Elk River - could handle the leak from Freedom Industries on Barlow Drive, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin declared a state of emergency in the The ban could affect as many as 100,000 West Virginia American Water customers, including restaurants, businesses and hospitals.five counties.

Residents swarmed grocery stores, convenience stores and anywhere else with bottled water on Thursday evening, and shelves were quickly depleted.

State and water company officials did not give an estimate on when the water might be safe to drink or use. **"The state of emergency will be in place until we are cleared by the Department of Health and Human Resources, DEP and the company say that the water is safe," Tomblin said.**

Places that don't use water from West Virginia American Water are not affected. That includes St. Albans, where Mayor Dick Calloway, whose city gets its water directly from the Coal River, said his town's residents would not fall under the "do not use" order.

West Virginia American Water President Jeff McIntyre said at Thursday's news conference that the company was "fairly confident" earlier in the day that its plant could handle the treatment of the chemical.

"It's clear the chemical has infiltrated the water," McIntyre said. "In an abundance of caution, we are taking these steps today."

He said the water company said is testing the water to better understand the concentration that entered its treatment system.

When asked what might happen if a person consumed the chemical, McIntyre didn't get specific, only saying "it's not particularly lethal in its usage form" and the effects of the chemical would depend on its concentration.

Dr. Rahul Gupta, health officer for the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, said restaurants, bars, day-care centers and other businesses with a health permit in Kanawha and Putnam counties would be sent a message to "cease operations immediately."

Gupta said there are about 1,200 health department permits issued in Kanawha County and about 300 in Putnam County, where the Kanawha department has temporarily taken over health enforcement duties.

The health department is also working on getting information to people concerned about drinking the water, Gupta said.

"There is very limited information on this particular chemical," he said.

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper said the county emergency operations center has been opened and emergency crews are assessing their response.

"Earlier today we were assured there was no harm to the public," Carper said. "We'll do blame assignment later. Now we have to deal with it."

Carper said the do-not-use order would effectively shut down restaurants, nursing homes and any other establishment that relies on water. He did not know how long the emergency would last.

"I have been promised by the governor himself that we'll have any resources we need," he said. "I predict it's going to be a long night."

The chemical that leaked into the river from Freedom Industries was 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, DEP spokesman Tom Aluise said.

Freedom Industries produces "freeze conditioning agents, dust control palliatives, flotation reagents [and] water treatment polymers," among other chemicals, according to its website.

Freedom Industries officials, including the company's president, Dennis Farrell, did not return repeated phone calls on Thursday.

Earlier Thursday, some emergency officials were saying they had found little information about potential toxic effects of the substance.

One material safety data sheet, or MSDS, said that, "no specific information is available ... regarding the toxic effects of this material for humans.

"However, exposure to any chemical should be kept to a minimum," the MSDS said. "Skin and eye contact may result in irritation. May be harmful if inhaled or ingested."

Less than three hours before the state of emergency was declared, an official statement from West Virginia American Water was issued assuring the public and media that the spill "does not present a health risk to customers."

The water company announced an emergency press conference regarding the spill at 5:09 p.m. and Tomblin officially announced the state of emergency around 6 p.m.

"This is not a chemical that we deal with every day. It's not the type of thing we would see in dealing with a water treatment plant," McIntyre said. "We took some time to understand even what we were dealing with at the time."

McIntyre said the company will have to do "extensive flushing" to make sure the contaminant is out of its system. He couldn't say how long the process will take.

There were no reports of illness as a result of contaminated water consumption as of Thursday

evening, according to McIntyre.

Gianato advised those customers with concerns of exposure or consumption of the chemical can call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. If someone is obviously sick, they should go to the hospital or call 911, Gianato said.

At the Charleston Town Center Mall, marketing director Lisa McCracken said Thursday evening, "We've closed our restaurants and we closed our treateries<co >. We've turned off all the public restroom faucets, and we have issued an advisory mall-wide to the tenants telling them not to use the faucets in their establishments."

Crystal Del Giudice, a supervisor at the Starbucks coffee shop in the mall, said employees ran out to buy hand sanitizer so they could clean themselves up after they closed the store.

"It's like the apocalypse," she said, half-jokingly.

Several mall restaurants had signs posted informing customers that they were closed because of the water emergency.

But some restaurants in downtown Charleston were unaware of the order to shut down.

Staff at Jimmy John's and Adelphia on Capitol Street were still serving Thursday evening, although other restaurants on the street were shutting down. Adelphia workers said they were trying to contact the restaurant's owners before shutting down.

At the Kroger in Kanawha City, shelves in the bottled-water aisle were nearly bare. Charleston Police officers kept an eye on the crowd that came to buy water.

Kerstin Halstead of Campbells Creek loaded two cases of bottled water into her SUV in the parking lot. "People have been grabbing it like crazy ... and some people were getting - well, they could have shared more," she said.

Halstead was doing her regular grocery shopping when her husband called and told her the news and asked her to pick up a case of water.

It was a similar story at the Rite-Aid on Charleston's East End, which ran out of water just after 6:30 p.m., according to a store employee. Customers were buying ice instead.

Ruby Piscopo, 28, of Charleston, and Christi Pritt, 29, of Belle, were having an after-work drink when they heard about the chemical leak.

"We started getting texts and changed the TV to the news," Piscopo said. "I wasn't concerned until someone said it could go on for days."

The two bought $30 worth of water between them. They had other friends buying water throughout the city with the intention of splitting it up later.

Philip Toliver of Charleston came to the East End Rite-Aid because the one on Bridge Road had already sold out of bottled water, he said. He bought six cases.

"[I thought] 'I think I need to get some water,'" Toliver said upon learning of the chemical leak. He added that if the state of emergency stretched on for more than a few days, he would consider leaving town for a while.

Mark Ferrell

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