

Instructions for Fecal Coliform or E. Coli Notice

Since exceeding the fecal coliform or E. coli maximum contaminant level is a Tier 1 violation, you must provide public notice to persons served as soon as practical but within 24 hours after you learn of the violation. During this time, you must also contact the Minnesota Department of Health. You should also coordinate with your local health department. You may also have to modify the template if you also have high nitrate levels or other coliform MCL violations. You must use one or more of the following methods to deliver the notice to consumers:

- Radio
- Television
- Hand or direct delivery
- Posting in conspicuous locations

You may need to use additional methods (e.g. newspaper, delivery of multiple copies to hospitals, clinics, or apartment buildings) since notice must be provided in a manner reasonably calculated to reach all persons served.

The notice is appropriate for hand delivery or a newspaper notice. However, you may wish to modify it before using it for a radio or TV notice. If you do, you must still include all required elements and leave the health effects language in italics unchanged. This language is mandatory. If you post or hand deliver, print your notice on letterhead, if you have it.

Population Served

Make sure it is clear who is served by your water system, you may need to list the areas you serve.

Corrective Action

In your notice, describe corrective actions you are taking. Listed below are some steps commonly taken by water systems with fecal coliform or E. coli violations. Use one or more of the following actions, if appropriate, or develop your own:

- We are chlorinating and flushing the water system.
- We are switching to an alternate drinking water source.
- We are increasing sampling for coliform bacteria to determine the source of the contamination.
- We are repairing the wellhead seal.
- We are repairing the storage tank.
- We are restricting water intake from the river/lake/reservoir to prevent additional bacteria from entering the water system and restricting water use to emergencies.

After Issuing the Notice

Send a copy of each type of notice and a certification letter that you have met all the public notice requirements to the Minnesota Department of Health within ten days from the time you issue the notice.

It is recommended that you modify health professionals in the area of violation. People may call their doctors with questions about how the violation may affect their health, and the doctors should have the information they need to respond appropriately. In addition, health professionals, including dentists, use tap water during their procedures and need to know of contamination so they can use bottled water. It is a good idea to issue a "problem corrected" notice when the violation is resolved.

Source: Minnesota Department of Health