



**Ohio Toxic Substance
August 2 - 4, 2014
ESF #11 After Action Report (AAR)**



Incident Summary

The Ohio Governor declared a State of Emergency for three counties after authorities discovered high toxicity levels in water from a water treatment plant in Toledo August 2. The FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Chicago activated to Level 2 including ESF11 August 3. The toxin microcystin was determined to be the result of high concentrations of algae in western Lake Erie. The water treatment plant using this water serves approximately 500,000 customers across a 100 square mile area in Toledo area. With the discovery of the toxin, a “do-not-drink or boil” advisory was instituted. It was lifted August 4, as water tests concluded the water was safe to drink. During the advisory, most manufacturing firms and restaurants were shut down. As a precaution, grocery stores discarded loose produce that was sprayed with water. The Ohio Department of Agriculture indicated there were no ill effects as there were no producers that used the public water system to water their animals. Nor was there an issue with crop growers as they irrigated their crops with pond or well water. The Ohio Department of Health reported a spike of Emergency Room visits during the “do-not-drink or boil” order with a gradually decreased number of visits in the days after the order was rescinded.

Monroe County Michigan was affected by water from the water treatment plant. The county imposed and lifted orders at the same time and manner as Ohio. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Food & Dairy Division with the Monroe County Health Department conducted outreach to food service and food establishments in the impacted areas.

Lessons Learned

Successful

- FEMA Region V effectively used the Emergency Notification System (ENS) to alert ESF coordinators of weekend conference calls to update ESFs. These calls enhanced the readiness of the Region V ESF11 Coordinator to respond timely.
- Established relationships with state agriculture emergency contacts enhanced response.
- Region V ESF11 collateral duty Desk Officers responded to provide potential staffing.
- FSIS was particularly helpful in providing information related to their authorities.
- Participation in the Vibrant Response 14 exercise the week prior to the Ohio activation enhanced the overall ability of the ESF11 Coordinator to respond.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

- ESF11 did not receive ENS notice of activation, which would have delayed the response significantly if the ESF11 Coordinator had not been monitoring emails.
- FEMA should develop just in time training for their WebEOC during activations.
- ESF access to state WebEOC would enhance situational awareness.
- Alerting the Regional Emergency Response Program Manager by telephone was needed, as iPhone emails were sporadic.