

Valle Verde Water Company-June 2007

BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Customers of Valle Verde Water Company (Valle Verde) were informed by a public notice mailed on January 19, 2007 that the water system violated the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for tetrachloroethylene in December 2006. The public notice stated that Valle Verde would test the water quality quarterly; inform the customers when the problem is remedied; provided the required health effects statement; and provided a phone number for customers to obtain a translated copy or to ask questions.

On January 27, 2007, Valle Verde was connected to the City of Nogales water system via an emergency interim tie-in. The emergency interconnection provides additional potable water so the Valle Verde water system can meet daily demands.

As of this time, all customers of Valle Verde are being provided potable water either thru the emergency interconnect or via bottled water provided by the water system while system representatives work with ADEQ to employ a long term permanent solution.

ABOUT THIS PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM AND HOW IT OPERATES

Valle Verde Water Company (Valle Verde) is regulated, in part, by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), by rules promulgated under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Valle Verde is classified as a "community" public water system because it serves a year-round population of roughly 2300 persons via 750 service connections (water meters). The system is comprised primarily of wells (six), storage/booster tanks and various other distribution system components (e.g., main lines, pipes, meters, etc.).

Recent inspections and site visits by ADEQ staff in May and June of 2007 determined that the system's overall physical infrastructure meets technology standards. Except for wells #8 and #9, which are both currently disconnected from the system, there were no infrastructure deficiencies observed and the facilities appeared to be well maintained overall.

WHAT IS TETRACHLOROETHYLENE?

Tetrachloroethylene is primarily used in the dry cleaning industry and for textile processing. It has also been used for rubber coatings, solvent soaps, printing inks, adhesives, glues, sealants, polishes, lubricants and silicones. Tetrachloroethylene has also been used in producing refrigerants and for degreasing metals.

Tetrachloroethylene is most commonly referred to as PCE or PERC.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD (MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL) AND PUBLIC NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TETRACHLOROETHYLENE IN COMMUNITY PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS?

Tetrachloroethylene became regulated in 1991 under the Safe Drinking Water Act with a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 0.005 mg/L (equivalent to parts per million or ppm). That means that the EPA determined that consuming water with tetrachloroethylene levels less than or equal to (<) 0.005 mg/L does not pose a significant health risk. It should be noted, however, that EPA's maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) for tetrachloroethylene in water served by public water systems is "zero."

Should a regulated public water system determine at any time that it is providing water with tetrachloroethylene levels exceeding 0.005 mg/L, the system must, provide notification to its customers that include the following mandatory health effects statement for tetrachloroethylene:

Some people who drink water containing tetrachloroethylene in excess of the MCL over many years could have problems with their liver, and may have a risk of getting cancer.

Not all classifications of public water systems are required by rule to monitor for every regulated contaminant including tetrachloroethylene. For example, water systems that primarily serve "transient" populations (e.g., campgrounds, RV sites, restaurants, rest areas, etc.) are only required to monitor for the presence of bacteria,

nitrate and nitrite. As such, these types of regulated public water systems are not required to monitor for tetrachloroethylene.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM?

On January 27, 2007, the City of Nogales allowed Valle Verde access to the City's water supply through an interconnect, while Valle Verde works to remedy the situation either through the installation of treatment, new drinking water sources or a permanent connection to another regulated water system. With the exception of customers living in the Los Robles Subdivision which has 15 connections and serves approximately 50 people, the water system is no longer supplying water from its tetrachloroethylene contaminated sources (wells #1, #2, #4 and #7). Due to Valle Verde distribution system delivery limitations, City of Nogales water cannot be provided to the Los Robles Subdivision and well #4 is being used to supply water for non-consumptive purposes (flushing toilets, laundry, etc.). Valle Verde is currently providing 15 gallons of bottled water per home per day for consumptive uses to the Los Robles customers.

ADEQ wants to assure Valle Verde customers that we are committed to having the water system implement a long-term solution to the tetrachloroethylene contamination issue so that customers are assured of safe and reliable drinking water for the foreseeable future.

ADEQ will conduct an investigation of the sources and extent of tetrachloroethylene contamination near Valle Verde. If the source(s) of tetrachloroethylene impacting the area groundwater can be identified, ADEQ will begin taking actions as necessary to protect public health.

I LIVE IN THE NOGALES WASH AREA BUT DO NOT GET MY WATER FROM VALLE VERDE. HOW DOES THE PRESENCE OF TETRACHLOROETHYLENE IMPACT MY PRIVATE WELL?

If you have a private well, regular water quality testing is very important. Many contaminants cannot be identified by taste or odor, making it difficult for homeowners to know if the water quality of their well has changed. Neither EPA nor ADEQ regulate private wells and the State of Arizona does not require periodic sampling of private wells after they are initially installed. This makes it the responsibility of homeowners to periodically test their well for contamination.

More information on the testing of private wells can be found on EPA's Web site at the following link: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/index2.html>

ADEQ CONTACTS

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