



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Blue-Green Algal Toxins In Ohio River Below Advisory Threshold For Recreational Activities**

### *Precautionary Statement Lifted*

**SPRINGFIELD** - The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency announced today that recent samples taken from the Illinois portion of the Ohio River indicate that levels of the blue-green algal toxin are well below advisory thresholds for recreational activities in the river. Therefore, IDPH and IEPA are removing the precautionary statement pertaining to the Illinois portion of the Ohio River due to potential toxins from blue-green algae.

Last month, IDPH and IEPA urged residents to use caution while in or on the Ohio River due to potential toxins from blue-green algae. Blue-green algae are microscopic organisms that naturally occur in lakes and streams. Rapid growth of algae is referred to as a “bloom.”

The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission and partners from various states along the Ohio River had been tracking an algal bloom in the river that stretched from West Virginia to the Illinois/Indiana border.

Harmful algal blooms can produce toxic chemicals that cause sickness or other adverse health effects in people and pets depending on the amount and type of exposure. Adverse health effects attributable to algal toxins can occur from direct skin contact, swallowing contaminated water, or inhaling water droplets in the air. Symptoms of exposure to algal toxins include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, or wheezing. More-severe symptoms may result from longer or greater amounts of exposure.

IDPH and IEPA remind the public there are always risks associated with recreational activities in natural waters and advise the public to avoid contact with waters that have obvious algal blooms.

If you are concerned you have symptoms that are a result of exposure to algal toxins, contact your health care provider or call the Illinois Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. If your pet experiences symptoms that may be a result of exposure, contact your veterinarian.

For additional information about harmful algal blooms, please visit <http://www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/surface-water/algal-bloom/index>.

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