

APPENDIX E: Special Language for Nitrate, Arsenic, Lead, Radon, *Cryptosporidium*, Ground Water Systems, and Surface Water Systems

(A) **Nitrate:** For systems that detect nitrate **above 5 mg/L as nitrogen, but below 10 mg/L as nitrogen**, the following language is REQUIRED:

Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 mg/L is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. Such nitrate levels in drinking water can interfere with the capacity of the infant's blood to carry oxygen, resulting in serious illness; symptoms include shortness of breath and blueness of the skin. Nitrate levels above 10 mg/L may also affect the ability of the blood to carry oxygen in other individuals, such as pregnant women and those with specific enzyme deficiencies. If you are caring for an infant, or you are pregnant, you should ask advice from your health care provider.

If a utility cannot demonstrate to the State Water Board with at least five years of the most current monitoring data that its nitrate levels are stable, it must also add the following language to the preceding statement on nitrate:

Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity.

(B) **Arsenic:** For systems that detect arsenic **above 5 µg/L, but below or equal to 10 µg/L**, the following language is REQUIRED:

While your drinking water meets the federal and state standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. The arsenic standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the cost of removing arsenic from drinking water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.

(C) **Lead¹:** Consistent with 40 CFR section 141.154(d)(1), every Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) must include the lead-specific language shown below. A water system may provide its own educational statement, but only after consulting with the State Water Board.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. [NAME OF

¹ All water systems are required to comply with the state Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). Water systems are also required to comply with the federal LCR, and its revisions and corrections. The 2007 Short-term Revisions of the LCR included mandatory language requirements that have not yet been adopted by the State Water Board.

UTILITY] is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. [Optional: If you do so, you may wish to collect the flushed water and reuse it for another beneficial purpose, such as watering plants.] If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/lead>.

Consistent with the California Code of Regulations, section 64482(c), systems that detect lead above 15 µg/L in more than 5 percent, and up to and including 10 percent, of sites sampled (or if your system samples fewer than 20 sites and has even one sample above the Action Level [AL]), the following language is REQUIRED:

Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested and/or flush your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using tap water. Additional information is available from the U.S. EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

(D) **Radon:** Systems that performed monitoring that indicates the presence of radon in the finished water MUST include the results of the monitoring and an explanation of the significance of the results. The following language MAY be used:

We constantly monitor the water supply for various contaminants. We have detected radon in the finished water supply in ____ out of ____ samples tested. There is no federal regulation for radon levels in drinking water. Exposure over a long period of time to air transmitting radon may cause adverse health effects.

The language below MAY be included if the level of information is helpful.

Radon is a radioactive gas that you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is found throughout the U.S. Radon can move up through the ground and into a home through cracks and holes in the foundation. Radon can build up to high levels in all types of homes. Radon can also get into indoor air when released from tap water from showering, washing dishes, and other household activities. Compared to radon entering the home through soil, radon entering the home through tap water will in most cases be a small source of radon in indoor air. Radon is a known human carcinogen. Breathing air containing radon can lead to lung cancer. Drinking water containing radon may also cause increased risk of stomach cancer. If you are concerned about radon in your home, test the air in your home. Testing is inexpensive and easy. You should pursue radon removal for your home if the level of radon in your air is 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L) or higher. There are simple ways to fix a radon problem that are not too costly. For additional

information, call your State radon program (1-800-745-7236, the U.S. EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Hotline (1-800-426-4791), or the National Safe Council Radon Hotline (1-800-767-7236).

(E) ***Cryptosporidium:*** Systems that have performed any monitoring for *Cryptosporidium* that indicates that *Cryptosporidium* may be present in the source water or finished water MUST include the results of the monitoring and an explanation of the significance of the results. The following language MAY be used:

Cryptosporidium is a microbial pathogen found in surface water throughout the U.S. Although filtration removes Cryptosporidium, the most commonly-used filtration methods cannot guarantee 100 percent removal. Our monitoring indicates the presence of these organisms in our source water and/or finished water. Current test methods do not allow us to determine if the organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease. Ingestion of Cryptosporidium may cause cryptosporidiosis, an abdominal infection. Symptoms of infection include nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Most healthy individuals can overcome the disease within a few weeks. However, immuno-compromised people, infants, small children, and the elderly are at greater risk of developing life-threatening illness. We encourage immuno-compromised individuals to consult their doctor regarding appropriate precautions to take to avoid infection. Cryptosporidium must be ingested to cause disease, and it may be spread through means other than drinking water.

(F) **Groundwater Systems:** For ground water systems that had a treatment technique (TT) violation described in Item S of the document titled “*Instructions for Completing the 2018 CCR for Small Water Systems*”, the following language MAY be used to describe the potential health effects. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not provide standard health effect language for these TT violations in the Ground Water Rule; U.S. EPA provided the language in their guidance to water systems.

Inadequately protected or treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.

(G) **Surface Water Systems:** For surface water systems that had a TT violation under the **Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR)**, **Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (IESWTR)**, **Filter Backwash Recycling Rule (FBRR)**, or **Long-term 1 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT1ESWTR)**, as described in Item U of the document titled “*Instructions for Completing the 2018 CCR for Small Water Systems*”, the following language is REQUIRED to describe the potential health effects:

Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches.

For surface water systems that had a TT violation under the **Long-term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2ESWTR)**, as described in Item U of the document titled “*Instructions for Completing the 2018 CCR for Small Water Systems*”, the following language MAY be used to describe the potential health effects. U.S. EPA did not provide standard health effect language for these TT violations in the LT2ESWTR; U.S. EPA provided the language in their guidance to water systems.

LT2ESWTR TT Violation	Health Effect Language
Uncovered and Untreated Finished Water Reservoir	<i>Inadequately protected water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.</i>
Determine and Report Bin Classification	<i>Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.</i>
Provide or Install an Additional Level of Treatment	<i>Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.</i>