



Public Health
Fayette County Health Department



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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

October 24, 2022

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Fayette, Kanawha-Charleston Health Departments Release Findings From Tests Of Shallow, Hand Dug Wells After Paint Creek Spill

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA – Environmental health specialists from the Fayette County and Kanawha-Charleston health departments hand delivered and mailed letters today to Paint Creek-area residents whose water wells were tested for a chemical spilled on the West Virginia Turnpike in late August.

The letters detail findings from water tests on samples from hand-dug and shallow wells in the area of the spill, which happened on August 24 when a tractor trailer carrying containers with the surfactant Empigen AS/F90 crashed on I-64 spilling the chemical into Skitter Creek, which flows into Paint Creek. Fayette County Health Department and Kanawha-Charleston Health Department employees sampled 19 hand-dug and shallow wells for testing. No chemical was found beyond the detection limit of 0.3 percent. These results do not reflect the overall safety of the wells that were sampled. They only indicate that the chemical spilled was not detected above that level in the wells that were tested.

Properly constructed private wells were not impacted by the spill. Consuming water from a hand-dug or shallow well is not recommended. “These are not safe sources of drinking water,” said Dr. Steven Eshenaur, D.O., Kanawha-Charleston Health Department’s Health Officer.

“Representatives from both the Kanawha-Charleston and Fayette County health departments worked together to ensure that hand-dug or shallow wells in the area of the chemical spill were sampled and tested. This event reminds us of the importance of working as one to protect the public health of West Virginians across county lines,” Eshenaur said.

Dr. Anita Stewart, D.O., Fayette County Health Department’s Health Officer, agreed. “Our teams at both health departments – Fayette and Kanawha-Charleston – remain committed to ensuring the health and safety of our communities, be it in response to a hazardous spill or providing resources during the latest infectious disease threat. We appreciate the patience and cooperation of the greater Paint Creek communities during this investigation.”

Empigen AS/F90 is also called cocamidopropyl dimethylamine. It is commonly used as a surfactant or antistatic agent, or in disinfectant, cosmetics or liquid dish soap. A few products listed as containing the chemical include Shaklee "Get Clean" Hand Dish Wash Liquid Concentrate, EWG Skin Deep Green People, Irritated Scalp Shampoo, and Paula's Choice Hydrating Gel-to-Cream Cleanser.

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