

Cross-cutting area: Communications

Remediation PFAS Guidance

Goal: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will communicate decisions and findings to relevant stakeholders in a community. It will also be expected that responsible parties (RPs) communicate their actions and decisions to all stakeholders and locally affected communities. When possible, it is ideal to proactively communicate with residents, business owners, and other adjacent property owners to share information about site activities. There can be a tendency and temptation to delay formal communication until “all the facts are known.” With more complete information, staff hope to be better positioned to answer and address questions from community members. Unfortunately, sampling and site investigations can be lengthy and time-consuming processes. Failure to proactively communicate can create a communications vacuum where misinformation can be spread as residents become concerned because they “haven’t heard anything.”

- **Initial site review:** Throughout the determination of whether a site will be evaluated for the presence of a PFAS release, preparations will begin for future communications. This includes identifying stakeholders and parties involved. The groundwork for future communications should be detailed and prepared for the site investigation stage.
- **Site investigation:** A determination should be made when community notification will occur. Identify past and present work and relay this information to pertinent stakeholders. Ensure the site is listed properly on the What’s in My Neighborhood (WIMN) webpage and contact information is correctly displayed for community outreach. Communications should be timely and transparent. Site closure should be communicated to all relevant stakeholders and updated on the WIMN webpage. If a site continues to the Risk Assessment stage, communications must evolve along with the on-site and off-site investigation work.
- **Risk assessment:** Risk should be communicated to all potential receptors identified with present data and known risks. Ensure transparency and accessibility to information. Ensure that translation and interpretation services are available if a non-English speaking community is identified. Solicit community feedback and input. Communications should evolve with community response and feedback.
- **Remediation:** Provide all relevant stakeholders with information on mitigation and remedial measures. Identify details on what actions are being taken and communicate any maintenance requirements (bottled water delivery, GAC filter changeouts, etc.) Present long-term solutions if there are interim mitigation efforts.
- **Site closure:** Ensure all stakeholders are informed of site closure. Update relevant webpages (WIMN, site-specific webpage, etc.). Communicate any longer-term investigation or monitoring work planned. Provide a full breakdown of what the problem was, what the solutions have been, and the data to support site closure.
- **Disposal:** Have resources available for PFAS disposal options. This requires up to date information to be sought out and shared. PFAS disposal will likely be a moving target with options evolving. Stay up to date and communicate updates as they are understood.
- **Brownfield assurances:** Ensure off-site impacts are being assessed and addressed upon discovery of contaminants on Brownfield sites. Evaluate and communicate both on-site and off-site remedial activities and mitigation efforts.