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## **Public Drinking Water Systems to be Aided by Ohio EPA's New Communication Network**

To keep up with the speed of business, Ohio EPA has added a new notification tool that allows quick and easy communication with public water systems.

Ohio EPA can initiate a group call to designated public water systems to provide emergency alerts or compliance reminders. The system has been described as a reverse 911 alert system since it allows immediate notification to those supplying public drinking water. The service provider, "One Call Now," set up the automated notification system to contact three audiences: public water systems; certified operators; and certified labs.

Systems have already been contacted to notify them that the network is in place and to explain how it will be used. Ohio EPA will continue to leverage new technology to create a more efficient communication mechanism utilizing a cost-effective web-based notification system to better inform water systems.

The notification system could be used in the event of an emergency to provide immediate instructions on how drinking water systems can best protect public health during a weather event or natural disaster. It also can be used to remind public water systems about upcoming deadlines for both chemical and bacteriological monitoring, consumer confidence reports (local water reports required from public water systems and mailed to water consumers annually), when license renewals are due, enforcement order deadlines and other pending requirements.

Notifications and schedules regarding license renewals also can be pre-recorded and distributed by phone message to certified operators and certified labs to assist them with compliance and staying up to date.

Ohio EPA added the system now because updates in technology that allow the system to be operated as a web-based system have become very reasonably priced.

Ohio EPA and U.S. EPA share a goal to bring water systems into compliance through improved monitoring and violation reporting. The new system provides a cost-effective way to increase awareness of when those functions need to take place. It is not intended to replace any written or correspondence, but to supplement and expand the Agency's communication capabilities.