



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 8, 2008

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## **Wastewater and Drinking Water Facility Operators Urged to Verify Identity of Environmental Protection Agency Inspectors**

### ***Reports of visits by “fake inspectors” tied in with chemical sales in two communities***

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is urging personnel at regulated facilities, such as wastewater and drinking water treatment plants, to verify the identification of government inspectors, after receiving reports that at least two facilities were contacted by individuals falsely claiming to be EPA inspectors, who then cited potential algae violations and penalties. In both cases, a short time later, a salesman for a chemical firm showed up offering products to address the alleged violations. One community made a \$15,000 purchase and the other made a \$10,000 purchase.

Both communities have contacted the Illinois Attorney General’s Consumer Fraud Division about the incidents. In addition, the Illinois EPA Division of Legal Counsel is investigating the matter in cooperation with other agencies. Illinois EPA’s Bureau of Water is also reaching out to facility operators through their association newsletters and web sites, and this news release.

#### How to verify the inspector is legitimate:

Know your inspector. Illinois EPA and USEPA inspectors carry identification with a photograph issued by the State of Illinois and the Federal Government, respectively. If you have not met the inspector, ask to see their ID. Some facilities routinely request that inspectors show their ID.

1. Make sure you have a telephone number for the inspector so you can request additional information. Responsibilities of a field inspector include inspection of facilities, education of permittees, and issuing noncompliance advisories (NCAs).
2. Violation notices (VNs) are issued by the Illinois EPA Compliance Assurance Section in Springfield. All letters from the IEPA are issued on official letterhead. If you receive an NCA or a VN, call the telephone number provided in the letter if you have questions about the contents.
3. If you are approached by someone claiming to be an inspector, who you suspect is not representing the Illinois EPA or the USEPA, please contact your regional office, or call Bruce Yurdin at IEPA headquarters in Springfield, at 217/782-3397.

The Illinois EPA only issues violation notices (VNs) by letter. Any facility that receives a VN will be given an opportunity to respond—usually within 30 days of receipt of the letter. If the facility does not provide an adequate response to the VN, the IEPA may issue a notice of intent to pursue legal action (NIPLA). This action can lead to a law suit filed by the Illinois Attorney General’s Office. Only then will the facility receive a notification of monetary penalties for violations.

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