

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**DEP FINES AUDUBON WATER COMPANY \$72,500 FOR
VIOLATING SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT**
Company Failed to Report Elevated Levels of Copper in Drinking Water

NORRISTOWN – The Department of Environmental Protection announced today that it has fined Audubon Water Company of Norristown, Montgomery County, \$72,500 for violating the Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water Act in November 2006.

“The company failed to notify the department and the public of an incident that threatened the health of its customers,” DEP Regional Director Joseph A. Feola said. “Several people reported becoming ill after drinking water that contained elevated levels of copper.”

Violations outlined in the penalty action occurred between Nov. 1 and Nov. 10, 2006. During that time, the water company installed new carbon filters on two of its production wells located at Valley Forge Corporate Center and it used citric acid to condition the filters.

The citric acid conditioning process was not approved by DEP.

On Nov. 8 and Nov. 9, the company received complaints of blue-green water throughout portions of its system, which serves nearly 9,000 residents in sections of Lower Providence Township. The affected service area includes the Audubon Elementary School, where at least one student was reported sick after drinking the water.

It was not until Nov. 10 that the Audubon Water Company notified DEP of the discolored water and reported illnesses. As a regulated public water system, the company was required to notify the department within one hour of any circumstance that adversely impacted the quality of its drinking water.

The company also failed to consult DEP within 24 hours of discovering the problem, as required, to discuss how best to notify its customers. It also failed to provide public notification of a waterborne emergency within 24 hours.

Immediate effects of drinking water that contains elevated levels of copper include nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhea. The elevated copper levels in the Audubon Water Company's system presented a serious health threat to babies and people with liver toxicity and Wilson's disease.

The company's failure to report the problem to DEP and the public within the first 24 hours, coupled with its inability to maintain a safe supply of drinking water following the replacement of carbon filters, constituted a public nuisance and renders the company liable for civil penalties.

For more information on drinking water issues, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Water management.

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