

INCIDENT: Backflow Incident at a Swimming Pool
LOCATION: Liddieville, Louisiana
SOURCE: www.abpa.org
DATE OF INCIDENT: 8/1/2012

Due to a cross contamination incident with a customer's swimming pool, the Liddieville Water System issued a boil water advisory for all 441 connections in Franklin Parish. The problem has been corrected and system personnel are flushing the system. Samples are planned to be collected on Monday the 6th with results anticipated from the Shreveport lab on Wednesday the 8th. A resident called the Louisiana Department of Health and Human Services to report her family being ill with bacteriological infections. Her suspicions stemmed from the Liddieville Water System as being the source of their problems. The resident stated that their water began smelling and that it had been occurring for quite a while. The resident also stated that she contacted the water system months back and that they sent one of their operators out to flush the line. The complainant stated that the operator was unable to turn on the flush valve at the end of their line due to a tree root that was blocking access to the valve, but that the operator asked the resident to turn on all of their faucets in the home and allow them to flush the line out. The complainant stated that she did and it made the problem better, but the odors had returned and now her son was ill with the same infection that her daughter had earlier during the first episode (at the time she did not know what the children had been treated for). The complainant stated she wanted someone to test their water and find out what it was that was making them sick and if it was coming from the water.

The LA Department of Health and Human Services informed the complainant that they were unaware of a recent positive coliform sample for their system. They also informed the complainant that their system did have issues with nitrates and that it should not be an issue as their system chlorinates their water. They asked the complainant what odor she smelled, with her response being "algae". They asked the complainant how far off of the main line was their home, with her response being 0.25 miles and that their drive was once a parish maintained road but was now a private drive and they owned 50 acres. They asked the complainant if they had livestock troughs on their farm, to which she said "no". When asked about swimming pools, she said "yes". They inquired further how was their pool filled and was it an above or below ground pool, with her response being; "a big above ground pool and that she filled it with a garden hose". They LA DHHS asked if they left the garden hose in the pool and she replied "yes". They asked if she ever noticed it siphoning water at which time she replied "yes". They asked what kind of chlorination system do you have with the pool and she said they would turn it on when they were using it, but it was not operated all of the time. The LA DHHS informed the complainant that this was most likely was caused the problem and that she should remove the hose immediately and never to do this again. They informed the complainant that this is a problem for water systems and this type of action can contaminate a distribution system and affect not only her family but her neighbors and other member of the water system. They told her that she should always use an air gap when filling her pool. When the LA DHHS contacted the Liddieville Water System about their findings they stated that they would begin another flush. They said their system has a lot of customers with swimming pools and stock tanks as well as farm chemical tanks. After the discovery boil water advisory was issued for the Liddieville Water System and they also started a program to alert customers about the problems with cross connection.