



GWA complies with Guam EPA's Interim Action Level for dieldrin, issues notification advisories September 12

A joint release from the Guam Environmental Protection Agency, the Guam Waterworks Authority and the Department of Public Health and Social Services

SEPTEMBER 20, 2025 (ChST) – (GUAM) – On September 12, 2025, the Guam Waterworks Authority (GWA) issued Tier 1 health advisory notices to 1,112 customers regarding the detection of dieldrin in the water supply serving a specific areas of Yigo. Dieldrin is a manmade chemical that was used as an insecticide and termiticide from the 1950s until 1987. Dieldrin production ceased in 1987.

While dieldrin is not a federally regulated drinking water contaminant, GWA is required by the Guam Environmental Protection Agency's (GEPA) to notify customers when it is detected above its Interim Action Level requirements (IAL) for dieldrin which took effect on August 1, 2025. The notices mailed to affected Yigo customers informed them that the average levels for dieldrin sampled at the entry point (the well) in their part of the distribution system is greater than 0.2 parts-per-billion (ppb).

NOTIFICATIONS WERE NOT SENT ISLAND-WIDE

GWA's dieldrin monitoring data and actual distribution system configuration were analyzed to determine that of a total of 43,780 GWA accounts, **1,112 customers** receive their water from one well which has concentrations of dieldrin above GEPA's IAL. GWA and GEPA jointly developed the advisory for these affected customers and GWA as the public water system issued the notice in accordance with GEPA requirements.

Since 2007, information on all water quality test results, including dieldrin, has been included in the Authority's annual Water Quality Report which is mailed annually and available on the GWA website. GWA monitors and reports all federally regulated contaminants subject to sampling and analysis by the US EPA's National Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Regulations, and unregulated contaminants subject to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule implemented under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Starting in 2023, in response to GEPA's work to evaluate the risk of this pesticide, specific information on dieldrin was included in the annual water quality reports received by GWA customers.

Beginning in late 2023, GWA and GEPA discussed plans to address dieldrin through additional treatment at the well impacting the customers in Yigo. After design work for the well was completed, the Consolidated Commission on Utilities (CCU) approved construction contracting.

On May 27, 2025 the CCU unanimously adopted GWA Resolution 42-FY2025, relative to the approval of construction contracting for granular activated carbon (GAC) treatment systems at deep wells affected by GEPA's dieldrin IAL. Grant funding and bond funding will cover the GAC system treatment construction contract which has an estimated cost of \$6.4M. A contractor has been selected and the treatment system is projected for completion by summer 2026.

UPI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OUTFITTED WITH FILTER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Prior to the issuance of the advisories, GWA leadership met with Guam Department of Education's (GDOE) Superintendent Dr. K. Eric Swanson, Ph.D., GEPA administrator Michelle C.R. Lastimoza and personnel from the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) Division of Environmental Health (DEH) to discuss a strategy to limit the IAL's impacts on Upi Elementary School operations.

As a result of this discussion, point of use water filtration systems were installed at each of the school's 10 drinking water fountains and a three-compartment cafeteria sink. The filter treatment systems installed at Upi Elementary school meet NSF certification as required by GEPA for approved treatment methods to reduce dieldrin concentration to levels which comply with GEPA's IAL.

FILL STATIONS AND TANKERS POSITIONED IN YIGO

GWA has deployed fill stations throughout Yigo. A water tanker has been positioned at the GWA Y-15 well site and at the entrance adjacent to Gill Breeze. GWA has also provided a fill stations at the Yigo Mayor's Office, Yigo Gym and at the GWA water pump station site along Route 1, Marine Corps Drive by Chalan Arendo. Water dispensed from the tankers and the fill station spigots are sourced from water sources not affected by GEPA's IAL.

SOURCE OF DIELDRIN CONTAMINATION

Although it was commonly used as a pesticide, the exact source of dieldrin contamination affecting this area is **unknown**. At this time, we can only speculate that areas in Guam where dieldrin may have been applied as a termiticide have been disturbed as a result of demolition of older structures, perhaps in relation to new construction and development. This disruption exposes potentially contaminated soil to rainfall – causing dieldrin to percolate into our groundwater sources.

IAL BACKGROUND

Guam Public Law 35-115 passed in December 2020 gives GEPA the statutory authority to establish IALs for unregulated contaminants which they deem to be an unacceptable health risk. Initial discussions to exercise this authority specifically for dieldrin were first made public during a GEPA board of directors meeting in December 2023. On November 21, 2024, the GEPA board of directors unanimously passed a resolution to adopt and establish health-based IALs for dieldrin in drinking water. On August 1, 2025, Guam EPA effectuated compliance requirements for the IALs: 0.2 ppb for long-term cancer risk; and 0.5 ppb for short-term, non-cancer health advisory concentration.

For more information about dieldrin, the community is urged to contact GEPA at 671-588-4751, or visit www.epa.guam.gov/dieldrin. For more information about GWA's water quality, visit www.gwa.guamwaterworks.org/WQR-2024.

For more information about this release, please contact the GWA Community Outreach Program Director at 671-300-6041 or nrlee@guamwaterworks.org. For regular updates on GWA services, follow us @guamwaterworksauthority on Facebook and Instagram - or visit guamwaterworks.org.