


Example Harmful Algal Bloom Press Release

	<i>News Release</i>
109 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219 • www.vdh.virginia.gov	

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Month, XX,

For More Information Contact

Release #XX

Contact name and number (and title if not a PIO--PIO contact preferred)

TOXIC HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM OCCURRING IN X WATERBODY

Public advised to avoid water contact

(City/County, Va.)— High levels of toxic algae have been found in **X Waterbody**. A harmful algal bloom of *Microcystis aeruginosa* is occurring in the waterbody. This type of blue-green algae produces a toxin that can cause rashes and other illness. The Virginia Department of Health is warning citizens to stay out of the water and to keep their pets and children out as well. Due to low body weight, children and pets are at greater risk of severe illness if the water is ingested.

Harmful algal blooms occur when warm water and nutrients combine to make conditions favorable for blue-green algae growth. The algae become so abundant that they can turn the water green or bluish-green and may produce and release toxins. Microcystin, one type of toxin which can be produced by blue-green algae, can develop in green, blue, or white clumps or glops on the surface of the water. It may also look like thick, green-blue paint on the surface of the waterbody.

“The Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health will continue to monitor water quality in **X Waterbody** during the harmful algal bloom,” said a **VDH representative**.

To prevent illness, people should:

- Avoid contact with any area of the waterbody where water is green or an advisory sign is posted
- Keep children and pets out of affected areas too, and quickly wash them off with soap and water after coming into contact with algae and **never drink untreated water**
- If you experience symptoms after swimming in or near an algal bloom, seek medical care
- Call the Virginia Harmful Algal Bloom Hotline at 888-238-6154 for more information or to report blooms