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**Potential Scam Artists Attempt to Frighten Area Residents About Water Supply**  
False Claims About Chemicals Are Used to Sell At-Home Water Treatment Systems

**MURFREESBORO** - Recently, citizens of Rutherford County have been targeted by scam artists trying to sell filtering systems based on false claims about the overall quality of the county's drinking water. The scam artists tell residents that the water supply in Rutherford County is high in cyanuric acid and chlorine.

"Cyanuric acid has been classified as essentially nontoxic, said David Reed, Laboratory Director at the K. Thomas Hutchinson Water Treatment Plant. "It's a component of bleaches, disinfectants and herbicides. Even though cyanuric acid is considered safe, good hygiene and safety practices should be followed. But the main thing to remember is, CUD doesn't use cyanuric acid."

Officials with Consolidated Utility District (CUD) note this isn't the first time scam artists have used scare tactics to get the public's attention. "We do not use cyanuric acid in our water treatment," says CUD Water Quality Coordinator Randy Harrell. "The use of cyanuric acid is against state law. As for chlorine, we use a very specific and highly regulated amount to protect the water supply against pathogens in the water. The right amount of chlorine is vital to keep our water clean and ready for use."

Chlorine is a common chemical used as a disinfectant and as a reliable method for eliminating disease-causing bacteria and viruses. Chlorine is also helpful for prevention of algae and slime growth in treatment plants and pipeworks.

“We publish our Consumer Confidence Report every year and send it in our billing statements to all our ratepayers,” Harrell said. “So, every person and business that relies on water from CUD can see the data.”

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) requires water utilities to maintain a level of 0.2 parts per million in the water system at all times to protect customers from waterborne diseases. Cyanuric acid is present in drinking water when chemicals commonly referred to as dichlor or trichlor are used as alternative chlorine sources.

### **How to Spot Scam Artists**

The Federal Trade Commission carries extensive information on its website – [consumer.ftc.gov](http://consumer.ftc.gov) – to help consumers spot and avoid scams of various kinds. For example ...

- Consumers should be wary of companies offering free home water tests. If a company is advertising a “free home water test,” the truth is that company might be trying to sell you an expensive water system whether you need it or not.
- Often these companies don’t wish to be identified by name. Their materials may not carry a logo, and their ads don’t clearly state who paid for the ad space.
- If a company claims to be working for the government (state or local), this is a sales tactic. The government does not endorse water tests or water treatment products.
- If you see an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number, this does not mean that the product has been tested or approved by the agency.

Scammers will also use different methods to start a conversation and to show proof that their product works. These methods may include ...

- A door-to-door salesperson may claim that he/she will test your water for you. If this person is being pushy about testing your water, claims to work for the government, or does not have a permit, these are all signs of scams.
- Some salespeople may add tablets or drops to your water and tell you that if the water changes color, it is contaminated. The truth is, they could be adding anything to the water to entice you to buy their water treatment system.
- A company might contact you by email or phone to ask to test your water. The company may send you a test tube and ask you to fill it with water and mail it to them. Then they might call you and offer you a water purifier as part of a larger promotion. This scam has occurred more than once in the Murfreesboro area.

“We want our customers to be fully informed about the quality of their water,” said CUD General Manager William Dunnill. “Simply put, CUD does not and will not use cyanuric acid. Our usage of chlorine – and the amount we use – is mandated by the state and the EPA.

“Scam artists will do almost anything to pressure or frighten customers. We want our ratepayers to know the facts about their water quality, and we’ll be glad to answer questions at any time.”

*At Consolidated Utility District, our mission continues to be to provide safe drinking water for all residential, industrial, and governmental agencies, meeting and exceeding all federal and state standards at the lowest possible cost with high quality, efficiency, and integrity.*

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