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A private water treatment facility in Scottsdale that was the source of a chemical scare last month will be required to revise its operating procedures to ensure the Environmental Protection Agency is promptly notified of potential problems.

Water leaving the facility at 5975 N. Miller Road had nearly double the legal amount of trichloroethylene, or TCE, a suspected cancer-causing chemical, for eight days in October.

However, since that water was mixed with other sources once leaving the site, TCE levels were within federal limits by the time it reached customers.

The plant, which filters water from the North Indian Bend Wash Superfund site, is owned and operated by the Arizona American Water Co., a private company that serves nearly 5,000 customers in Scottsdale and Paradise Valley.

Because of a lab equipment problem, it took the EPA a month to get test results and ultimately notify the public.

The EPA will be able to determine exactly what needs to be changed in the company's operations and maintenance plan once the investigation wraps up, which should take a couple of weeks, said agency spokeswoman Allyn Stern.

"We are still trying to pinpoint what needs to be changed," Stern said.

The EPA's pledge came in a letter to the office of Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., dated Dec. 4.

"The EPA has taken this very seriously," Mitchell said.

Mitchell's office originally wrote to the EPA on Nov. 16 to request a meeting with the agency's chief to discuss why it took a month before the public was notified about TCE concentration levels.

Even when incidents don't ultimately endanger the public, it's the agency's responsibility to let people know what happened and calm any fears, Mitchell said.

Mitchell plans to set up a meeting with the EPA to discuss the incident further.

"If it happened here, it may have happened other places. EPA has a responsibility to report any system failure immediately," Mitchell said.

Water Facility Must Revise Procedures After TCE Scare

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Stern said she didn't think standard procedures would need to be changed since the circumstances were so unusual. If there had been a health threat, the public would have been notified immediately, she said.