



AMERICAN SAMOA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

P.O. Box PPA

Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799

Information Release Authorization Form

Monday, September 09, 2013

LOLO M. MOLIGA
Governor

LEMANU P. MAUGA
Lt. Governor

AMEKO PATO
Director

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- Newspapers (Advertisement/Public Notice/Press Release)
- Radio Stations
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Attached is an Information Release issued by our office (AS-EPA). We would like to ask your assistance in making this information available to the public immediately, via your broadcasts or news publications. For additional information, kindly contact the AS-EPA Director, Ameko Pato or Deputy Director, Faamao Asalele, or Tumau Lokeni, Environmental Awareness & Education Program Manager at 633-2304.

Fa'afetai lava.

- Governor's Office, ASG Weekly
- Director, Department of Public Information (KVZK-TV)
- Samoa News
- Samoa Post
- KHJ FM 93.1 Radio Station
- WVUV FM 103.1 Radio Station
- KSBS FM 92.1 Radio Station
- KNWJ FM 104.7 Radio Station

Title/Heading:

1. "AS-EPA conducts Cesspool Inventory for the Territory"

Approved by: _____

Ameko Pato, Director
American Samoa – EPA

Date: _____

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American Samoa Environment Protection Agency (AS-EPA) conducts Cesspool Inventory for the Territory

In an effort to alleviate the Territory's standing boil water notice and improve groundwater quality, the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) will be conducting an island wide cesspool inventory. The primary focus of the inventory is to identify all cesspools in proximity to water wells with the goal of replacing them with septic tank systems that properly treat wastewater. The agency is initially targeting areas with problematic wells that continue to yield positive bacteria results as well as areas not connected to the sewer line system. This approach will significantly enhance groundwater quality and public health.

Since 2010, a boil water notice was issued for most parts of our Territory. The notice is still in effect until now and is primarily due to the continual detection of bacteria such as *E.coli* in our water systems. This type of bacteria is found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and their presence in water indicates contamination by human and/or animal waste. Evidently, this contamination is linked to illegal wastewater disposal systems such as cesspools. Because cesspools are open pits and not designed to treat sanitary waste, it poses a huge threat to groundwater supplies and ultimately human health. Therefore, the identification and removal of cesspools within our Territory has become a priority for AS-EPA.

In order to maximize resources and build local capacity, AS-EPA is partnering up with the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA), Department of Commerce (DOC), and the Department of Health (DOH) to implement the cesspool inventory. AS-EPA Director Ameko Pato during the initial meeting with the three departments stated that "it is vital that these unsanitary and illegal systems are identified so that solutions can be made to prevent groundwater contamination." He also indicated that "AS-EPA and its partners should move forward with the island wide cesspool inventory because our people's health is at risk."

AS-EPA along with the three departments will be inspecting and documenting the type of wastewater disposal systems each home possesses. Alongside the survey, AS-EPA is also integrating an education component which will educate the community about wastewater disposal systems and the impact they have on our local water resources. The agency is hopeful that the cesspool inventory will contribute to a reduction of bacteria in water wells and reduce pollutants from discharging into our near shore waters.

The inventory is slated to begin next month with the emphasis on the villages of Fagaima and Malaeimi to be surveyed first. AS-EPA kindly asks local residents for their assistance in making this project successful. For more information, please contact AS-EPA at 633-2304.