Presentation of the National Waterworks Crisis Support Team ("Nasjonal vannvakt")

5.05.2017
“Crisis support” for waterworks in Norway

- A long-awaited service for waterworks facing difficulties.
- Facilitating a rapid response to prevent situations that could have an impact on health, for example the spread of disease.
- Sweden has had a national group for water catastrophes (VAKA or Nationell vattenkatastrofgrupp) since 2004.
Background

- Norway is party to the WHO/UNECE's “Protocol on water and health” from 1999.
- In the “National targets for water and health” adopted by the Norwegian Government in 2014, crisis support for waterworks was specified as an example of a concrete measure.
- In 2016, the Norwegian Parliament granted funds to establish a national crisis support unit for waterworks.
- The national waterworks crisis support team was launched on 2 March 2017, subsequent to a pilot period in January and February 2017.
This is a 24-hour advisory service for waterworks that require advice and support in the event of acute incidents that may have an impact on water supply and may cause health-related problems.

The team is made up of professionals with experience from waterworks operations and crisis management.

Advice targets evaluation of the potential for microbiological contamination and health hazards caused by chemical contamination.

In special circumstances, the team will provide advice regarding hazardous chemical agents in the event of threats, and how to communicate such situations to the media and public.

Phone number 21 07 88 88
The phone line is manned by persons from the waterworks industry and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

The team is part of a network of expertise within drinking water hygiene, water supply, toxicology, epidemiology and microbiology.

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health is the administrator for the scheme.

Norsk Vann (Norwegian Water) is a cooperating partner.
How the team can help

- Any enquiries made to the team shall be approved by the waterworks’ manager or a delegate.
- The advice provided by the team shall help the waterworks establish a basis for implementation of action in a situation that threatens security of supply or drinking water quality.
- The team will not take over responsibility for the crisis.
- There will be no change in prevailing roles, responsibility and established notification and emergency preparedness routines.