

## Reporting Limits



### What are they?

In cases where testing has been mandated by a government agency, the agency may require contamination above a certain level to be reported, even if it is below the level of concern.

### How are they used?

Laboratories must use equipment and procedures that are capable of detecting contamination as low as the reporting limit. Sometimes tests show contamination above a reporting limit, but below a health-based standard. In those cases, a community might want to test nearby, to see if there is a contamination ‘hot spot’ they might have missed.

### How are they determined?

The reporting limits may be set at a particular fraction of the level of concern. For example, if the legal limit for a contaminant is 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ , the agency might set the reporting limit at 2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ , which is one-tenth the level of the limit. That way, they will know if contamination is anywhere close to the legal limit.

### How are they related to human health?

Contamination levels over the reporting limit aren’t a health concern, unless the levels *also* go over a health-based standard.