



**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**  
707 NORTH ARMSTRONG PLACE  
BOISE, ID 83704-0825  
TEL. (208) 327-8639  
FAX (208) 327-8595  
[cdhd.idaho.gov](http://cdhd.idaho.gov)

# NEWS

July 31, 2019

## **Contacts:**

### *Public Health*

Christine Myron, Public Information Officer  
Office (208) 327-8639 | Cell (208) 871-1712

### *Water Quality - DEQ*

Chase Cusack, Water Quality Analyst  
Office: (208) 373-0490

## **Health advisory issued for Mountain Home, Indian Creek and Blacks Creek Reservoirs**

**Elmore and Ada County, ID** — Central District Health (CDH) and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are issuing a health advisory for Mountain Home Reservoir located in Elmore County as well as Indian Creek Reservoir and Blacks Creek Reservoir, in Ada County. Residents are urged to use caution when recreating in or near the water.

Recent samples taken from the three water bodies indicate high concentrations of toxin-producing cyanobacteria, which can be harmful to people, pets, and livestock. Those with liver or kidney damage are at an increased risk of illness. Water samples were taken from recreational access areas along each of the reservoir banks, which included dried algae (see photos). Due to the low amount of water currently in each of the reservoirs, it is likely the harmful algal blooms cover the entirety of each reservoir.

Cyanobacteria are a natural part of Idaho's water bodies. When temperatures rise, their populations can bloom and toxic chemical compounds, or cyanotoxins, can be released into the water. Blooms can vary in appearance, and may look like mats, foam, spilled paint, or surface scum, and have a foul odor. While blooms can be discovered in one area of recreational water, they can move around to different areas, water depths and can change in severity.

### **When recreating near or in Mountain Home, Indian Creek and Blacks Creek Reservoirs, take the following precautions while the advisory is in effect:**

- Avoid swimming, wading, or other activities. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water.
- Do not drink or cook with water containing a bloom. Boiling and filtering the water can increase the risk.

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling fish caught in water experiencing a bloom. Cyanotoxins can accumulate in fish and the risk to people is being researched. Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption. If people choose to eat fish from this area, filet the fish and remove all of the fat, skin, and organs before cooking.
- Clean with potable water as soon as possible if water contacts skin or pet fur.

Symptoms of cyanotoxin exposure include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or wheezing. More severe symptoms affecting the liver and nervous system may result from ingesting water. If symptoms persist, consult your healthcare provider.

The public will be advised when it is likely the concern no longer exists.

### **More Information / Reporting a Potential Harmful Algal Bloom**

For information on cyanobacteria blooms and a map of recreation water quality health advisories in Idaho, visit [www.deq.idaho.gov/recreation-health-advisories](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/recreation-health-advisories). Many harmful algal blooms are identified through public reporting. If you suspect a Bloom on a recreational water body in Idaho, report it to DEQ at <https://cyanos.org/bloomwatch/>.

**###**