Informational Product Advisory

Subject: Waterworks Products Exposed to Floodwater
From: The Manufacturers Standardization Society ("MSS") of the Valve and Fittings Industry, on behalf of MSS Committee 111, Underwriter Valves & Flanged Fittings

Floodwater, particularly when widespread from natural disasters as experienced with Hurricane Harvey and Irma, most likely contains various organic and inorganic contaminants that may detrimentally affect human health and performance of waterworks products. These contaminants may be absorbed by product components such as elastomer seals and coatings. For example, EPDM, a prominent elastomer specified by domestic municipalities, suffers degradation when exposed to petroleum based material. It is possible that these absorbed contaminants may later be released into a potable water supply if exposed products are installed within a municipal water system.

In regards to uninstalled products exposed to floodwater, the best course of action to ensure public safety and reliability of utility systems is to avoid installation of the floodwater contaminated products. Some processes for sanitizing products may detrimentally affect product performance and will not mitigate damage to elastomers from floodwater contaminates.

After taking into account sanitation of floodwater exposed surfaces in contact with potable water, municipalities should conduct an active inspection and maintenance program of installed products, in accordance with the appropriate American Water Works Association (AWWA) Manuals of Water Supply Practices. These programs are vital to ensuring consistent long-term performance of waterworks products. Examples of AWWA manuals include M17 – Installation, Field Testing, & Maintenance of Fire Hydrants as well as M44 – Distribution Valves: Selection, Installation, Field Testing & Maintenance.

Robert F. O'Neill
Executive Director
Manufacturers Standardization Society (MSS)

Chad Harbour
Chair, MSS Committee 111

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