

## **Drinking Water Plant Operator Sentenced for Falsifying Reports**

On May 23, 2005, the Chief Operator of the Hawkins County First Utility District, Church Hill, Tennessee, was sentenced in U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Tennessee, to 3 years of probation, 100 hours of community service, and a \$100 special assessment. The Chief Operator was also ordered to surrender his Class IV Water Treatment license to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. This sentencing followed the individual's guilty plea to one count of submitting a false statement.

The Hawkins County First Utility District is a public water system that provides water to approximately 18,000 people. The District is required to submit comprehensive Monthly Operation Reports to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, an agency authorized by EPA to monitor and enforce compliance with the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Monthly Operation Reports are required to contain the results of monthly monitoring of raw and finished drinking water for various water quality parameters, such as turbidity and residual chlorine, to ensure the water is safe from contaminants.

The Chief Operator was responsible for preparing and submitting the Monthly Operation Reports to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The investigation determined that the reports were identical from month to month, reporting the same amount of water usage, on the same day of each month, for several years. If completed accurately, the reports would have reflected variations in the usage amounts.

*This investigation was conducted by the East Tennessee Environmental Crimes Task Force, of which the EPA OIG is a member.*