

# Water Lines

## SDW Hotline Report

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### Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & email)	Percent of Total* Questions
Tap Water Testing	242**	10
Local Drinking Water Quality	206	8
Household Wells	137	5
Lead	135	5
Other DW Background	130	5
Other EPA	120	5
Arsenic	101	4
Radon	101	4
Home Water Treatment Units	99	4
Consumer Confidence Report	93	4

\*A total of 2,543 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and email) in March 2002.

\*\*Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 29% of the tap water testing questions.

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or (877) EPAWATER

For More Information Contact:

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(202) 564-4621

Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton  
Under Contract #GS-10F-0090J

## What's New

### New Documents:

- *Draft Implementation Guidance for the Arsenic Rule and Clarifications to Compliance and New Source Contaminants Monitoring*, March 2002, is now available at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic.html>
- *Drinking Water from Household Wells*, January 2002, EPA816-K-02-003, is now available at [http://www.epa.gov/safewater/consumer/wells/household\\_wells.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/consumer/wells/household_wells.pdf)
- *Report to Congress: Small System Arsenic Implementation Issues*, March 2002, EPA815-R-02-003, is now available at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic.html>.

### Add This to Your Calendar:

- EPA is soliciting grant applications from large publicly owned systems through a Request for Applications. Awardees will receive up to \$115,000 to develop a vulnerability assessment (VA), emergency response/operating plan, security enhancements plans and designs, or a combination of these efforts.

Proposals are due April 29, 2002. Information can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/index.html>.

- The Safe Drinking Water Hotline is now taking registrations for the Surface Water Rule Treatment Rules Training Workshop (including the newly promulgated Long Term I Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule and Filter Backwash Recycling Rule). The workshop will address how the Surface Water Rules are interrelated by presenting the requirements by treatment technology. These workshops are open to all regions, tribes, states, and training and technical assistance providers. Training dates: May 16-17 Chicago; May 29-30 Boston; June 1-12 Denver; August 13-14 TBD.

## Security Qs & As

**Q:** Where can public water systems interested in applying for the Vulnerability Assessment grants locate the application material?

**A:** All Vulnerability Assessment grant application materials are available on the Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/index.html>.

## Did You Know?

If a 55 gallon drum of water represented the total supply of water on the planet then:

- The oceans would be represented by 53 gallons, 1 quart, 1 pint, and 12 ounces;
- The icecaps and glaciers would represent 1 gallon, and 12 ounces;
- The atmosphere would contribute 1 pint and 4.5 ounces;
- Groundwater would add up to 1 quart, and 11.4 ounces;
- Freshwater lakes would represent ½ ounce;
- Inland seas and saline lakes would add up to over 1/3 of an ounce;
- Soil moisture and vadose water would total to about ¼ of an ounce;
- The rivers of the world would only add up to 1/100 of an ounce (less than one-millionth of the water on the planet).

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## Frequently Asked Qs & As

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**Q:** *Does the temperature of drinking water contribute to the amount of lead that it contains? Which type of water should be used for cooking and drinking?*

**A:** According to the public information language specified in 40 CFR 141.85(a)(1)(iv)(B)(2), people should try not to cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water.

**Q:** *What does EPA set as a safe level for MTBE?*

**A:** There is no primary drinking water standard for methyl tertiary- butyl ether (MTBE). In 1997, EPA published an Advisory document on methyl tertiary-butyl ether (*Drinking Water Advisory: Consumer Acceptability Advice and Health Effects Analysis on Methyl Tertiary-Butyl Ether*, Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water, 1997). This non-regulatory document recommends keeping levels at a range of 20 to 40 parts per billion (ppb) or below. At this level, MTBE will probably not generate an odor or taste problem and there is little likelihood that in this range negative resulting health effects will occur. The December 3, 2001, Unified Agenda notes a Notice of Proposed Rule proposing a secondary standard for MTBE that will provide guidance for taste and odor acceptability and to protect the public welfare. The proposed rule making is expected to be published in August of 2002.

**Q:** *How can a list of "significant non-compliance" (SNC) data for public water systems be generated?*

**A:** According to Sue Pohedra of EPA, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance is the overseer of the SNC data. Requestors of SNC list information have to go through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). People may request national lists via FOIA fax at 202-260-4499 or may send their requests to the Freedom of Information Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW 20460 (mail code 1105A).

**Q:** *Where can I find the standard rounding procedures or significant figure use conventions when judging compliance with an MCL?*

**A:** Laboratories should observe conventions concerning proper use of significant figures in making calculations to avoid the appearance that the data are more precise than the method allows. Conventions for the use of significant digits and proper rounding of numbers are

discussed in detail in the EPA publication: Analytical Quality Control in Water and Wastewater Laboratories (EPA-600/4-79-019) and in Standard Methods for Examination of Water and Wastewater (Section 1050 B in the 18th Edition).

**Q:** *My facility treats water for processing purposes and employees use this water to shower. The definition of Public Water System includes the words "human consumption." Can showering be considered "human consumption?"*

**A:** On February 26, 1988, the United States District Court settled the *U.S. v. Midway Heights* case in part by claiming "human consumption includes drinking, bathing, showering, cooking, dishwashing, and maintaining oral hygiene" EPA Water supply guidance memo H22, August 1989. This guidance is available at: [http://www.epa.gov/safewater/wsg/wsg\\_H22.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/wsg/wsg_H22.pdf).

**Q:** *For UCMR sampling, the regulations in 40 CFR 141.35(a)(v)(ii)(c) require samples to be taken at the entry point to the distribution system. Does this mean before or after treatment?*

**A:** As specified in footnote f of Table 1 in 40 CFR 141.40, entry points to the distribution system (EPTDS) are after treatment.

**Q:** *What is the status of sodium as a regulated contaminant?*

**A:** At this time, sodium is not a regulated contaminant. Sodium is presently included on the Contaminant Candidate List. The notice of preliminary regulatory determination has not been published.

**Q:** *Why did EPA promulgate a combined nitrate / nitrite MCL?*

**A:** EPA set a maximum contaminant level for combined nitrate and nitrite to account for the possible additive toxicity of these two chemicals and also to protect against the deterioration of the drinking water quality, since the presence of nitrite in water is indicative of water contaminated with sewage (54 FR 22062, 22077; May 22, 1989).

**Q:** *Under the Public Notification Rule (PNR), must a system designated as a consecutive water system do public notification in the event of a violation by the wholesale system?*

**A:** Yes. According to 40 CFR 141.201(c)(1), "Each public water system must provide public notice to

persons served by the water system. Public water systems that sell or otherwise provide drinking water to other public water systems (i.e., to consecutive systems) are required to give public notice to the owner or operator of the consecutive system; the consecutive system is responsible for providing public notice to the persons it serves."

**Q:** Is there a list of states that have reciprocity with other states under the Operator Certification Program?

**A:** According to Jenny Jacobs of EPA's OGWDW, there is currently not a list of states that offer reciprocity under the Operator Certification Program.

**Corrections**

**Q:** What is the applicability of the proposed Ground Water Rule?

**A:** The requirements of the proposed Ground Water Rule would apply to: (1) all public water systems served solely by ground water, and (2) public water systems that distribute ground water that is not treated to a 4-log inactivation or removal of viruses. Systems supplied by

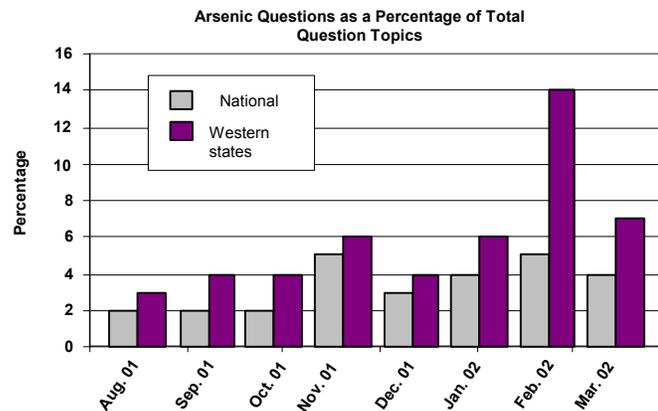
ground water under the direct influence of surface water would not be regulated under this rule as proposed. [This represents a correction to a Q&A published in the January 2002 Monthly Report]

**Q:** What is the effective date and compliance date for the Public Notification Rule revisions promulgated on May 4, 2000?

**A:** The revised regulations (under 40 CFR Part 141, Subpart Q) were effective on June 5, 2000. Public water systems in primacy states must comply with the rule beginning May 6, 2002, (regardless of whether the primacy state has adopted and EPA has approved the public notification rule primacy revision), unless a primacy state chooses to adopt the new regulations earlier. Public water systems where EPA directly implements the drinking water program (i.e., Wyoming, Washington, D.C., and Tribal lands) were required to comply with the new regulation on October 31, 2000. [This represents a correction to a Q&A published in the February 2002 Monthly Report]

Monthly Trends

According to the technical fact sheet on the final rule for arsenic, "compared to the rest of the United States, the Western states have more systems with arsenic levels greater than 10 µg/L." Is this reflected in a greater percentage of arsenic questions posed to the Hotline from the western states (AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, UT, and WA), compared to the national percentage? [The grouping of Western states for this analysis is based on the National Arsenic Occurrence Survey (NAOS) Database Western region.] Arsenic questions as a percentage of total question topics asked by people in the Western states is just above the national percentage but basically mimics the national trend. The exception was for the month of February, where the spike in percentage can be attributed to a large number of calls from people in Washington regarding registration for a forthcoming arsenic training program in Seattle.



## Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	1,783
Total number of emails received	348
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:16
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	96.8%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	93.5%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of emails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of Times Callers Listened to Recorded Message About Local DW Quality	970
Number of Times Callers Listened to Recorded Message About Arsenic Rule	96

## Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	Emails
March 2002	1,783	348
March 2001	3,024	547

## Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. EPA Internet	352	19%
2. State Lab Certification	216	12%
3. State PWSS	166	9%
4. NSF/WQA/UL	151	8%
5. Local Water System	139	7%
6. Local Public Health	99	5%
7. Non-EPA Internet	88	5%
8. Other Hotlines	76	4%
9. AGWT/WSC	73	4%
10. Regional Offices	70	4%

\*1,860 total referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in March 2002.

## Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	Emails
Analytical Laboratories	52	4
Citizen - Private Well	279	47
Citizen - PWS	823	125
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	157	26
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	84	31
Environmental Groups	12	0
EPA	36	5
Other Federal Agency	15	5
Government, Local	15	3
Government, State	48	11
Government, Tribal	0	0
Spanish Speaking	0	0
International	4	13
Media	5	2
Medical Professional	6	2
Public Water System	178	10
Schools/University	49	58
Other	20	6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>348</b>

## Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
1-Mar	88	00:15
4-Mar	102	00:14
5-Mar	86	00:16
6-Mar	82	00:11
7-Mar	79	00:10
8-Mar	69	00:10
11-Mar	113	00:09
12-Mar	100	00:20
13-Mar	87	00:17
14-Mar	84	00:28
15-Mar	82	00:34
18-Mar	100	00:27
19-Mar	99	00:19
20-Mar	72	00:13
21-Mar	86	00:17
22-Mar	71	00:11
25-Mar	70	00:08
26-Mar	87	00:13
27-Mar	96	00:22
28-Mar	71	00:12
29-Mar	59	00:09
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>00:16</b>

**Topic Categories**

Category	Calls	Emails
<b>Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts</b>		
Chlorine	17	7
Coliforms	37	1
Cryptosporidium	21	1
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	17	7
Disinfection – Home Water	17	4
Other Microbials	16	2
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	38	9
Trihalomethane (THM)	14	6
<b>Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)</b>		
Arsenic	95	6
Fluoride	16	7
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	17	3
Perchlorate	6	3
Phase I, II & V	58	12
Sodium Monitoring	7	1
Sulfate	2	3
<b>Lead and Copper</b>		
Copper	24	2
Lead	126	9
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	6	2
<b>Radionuclides</b>		
Radionuclides (Other)	21	5
Radionuclides (Radon)	93	8
<b>Secondary DW Regulations</b>		
Secondary DW Regulations	43	14
<b>SDWA Background/Overview</b>		
Definitions & Applicability	36	4
MCL List	61	13
Other Background	96	34
SDWA	35	5

Category	Calls	Emails
Water on Tap	24	4
<b>Other DW Regulations</b>		
Analytical Methods (DW)	42	10
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	4	4
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	87	6
DW Primacy (PWS)	5	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	7	1
Public Notification (PWS)	23	0
State Revolving Fund (DW)	8	2
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	74	6
<b>Other Drinking Water</b>		
Additives Program	4	3
Bottled Water	52	6
Complaints about PWS	26	7
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	3	0
Home Water Treatment Units	75	24
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	10	1
Local DW Quality	175	31
Tap Water Testing	232	10
Treatment/BATs (DW)	25	22
<b>Drinking Water Source Protection</b>		
Ground Water Rule	2	0
Sole Source Aquifer	0	1
Source Water/Wellhead Protect.	17	4
UIC Program	13	2
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	120	17
Non-Environmental	29	30
Non-EPA Environmental	52	36
Other EPA (Programs)	94	26
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>421</b>

## SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

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### APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

#### Proposed Rules

**“Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Approval of Analytical Method for Aeromonas; National Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Regulations: Approval of Analytical Methods for Chemical and Microbiological Contaminants”  
March 7, 2002 (67 FR 10532)**

EPA proposes the analytical method and an associated Minimum Reporting Level (MRL) for the analysis of Aeromonas to support the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation's List 2 monitoring. Additionally, EPA proposes to approve EPA Method 515.4 to support previously required NPDWR compliance monitoring for 2,4-D (as acid, salts and esters), 2,4,5-TP (Silvex), dinoseb, pentachlorophenol, picloram and dalapon, and USEPA Method 531.2 to support previously required NPDWR monitoring for carbofuran and oxamyl. Finally, EPA proposes to approve eight additional industry developed analytical methods to support previously required NPDWR compliance monitoring.

**“Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation for Public Water Systems; Establishment of Reporting Date”  
March 12, 2002 (67 FR 11071)**

This action proposes to establish August 9, 2002, as a new, later date by which large public water systems serving more than 10,000 persons must report all contaminant monitoring laboratory results they receive before May 13, 2002, for the UCMR monitoring program. Monitoring results received on or after May 13, 2002, would have to be reported within 30 days following the month in which laboratory results are received, as specified in the current regulation for this program.

#### Final Rules

**“Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation for Public Water Systems; Establishing of Reporting Date”  
March 12, 2002 (67 FR 11043)**

Today's direct final rule establishes August 9, 2002, as a new, later date by which large water systems serving more than 100,000 persons must report all contaminant monitoring results they receive before May 13, 2002, for the UCMR monitoring program. Monitoring results received on or after May 13, 2002, must be reported within 30 days following the month in which laboratory results are received, as specified in the current regulation for this program.

## Notices

**“Laboratory Quality Assurance Evaluation Program for Analysis of Cryptosporidium Under the Safe Drinking Water Act; Agency Information Collection: Proposed Collection; Comment Request”  
March 4, 2002 (67 FR 9731)**

Today's notice invites comment on EPA's proposed Laboratory Quality Assurance Evaluation Program for Analysis of Cryptosporidium under the Safe Drinking Water Act (Lab QA Program) (Section I). EPA also plans to submit to OMB for review and approval an ICR associated with information collections under the proposed Lab QA Program (Section II). EPA is requesting comments on specific aspects of the proposed Lab QA Program and the ICR. Finally, EPA solicits comments on its intention to seek an emergency clearance from OMB to begin collecting data from laboratories that are interested in participating in the Lab QA Program prior to OMB's final approval of the ICR.

**“Agency Information Collection Activities: Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Operator Certification Guidelines and Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grants Program”  
March 7, 2002 (67 FR 10404)**

In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the following ICR has been forwarded to OMB for review and approval: Operator Certification Guidelines and Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grants Program, OMB Control Number 2040-0236 (expiration date February 28, 2002).

**“Public Water System Supervision Program Revision for the State of Arkansas”  
March 11, 2002 (67 FR 10915)**

Notice is hereby given that the State of Arkansas is revising its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. Arkansas has adopted an Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule to improve control of microbial pathogens in drinking water, including specifically the protozoan Cryptosporidium, and a Stage 1 Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts Rule, setting new requirements to limit the formation of chemical disinfectant byproducts in drinking water. EPA has determined that these revisions are no less stringent than the corresponding federal regulations. Therefore, EPA intends to approve these program revisions.

**“Consent Decree Under Safe Drinking Water Act; *United States v. Arturo C. Muro and Manuela B. Muro*”  
March 11, 2002 (67 FR 10931)**

**“Public Water System Supervision Program Revision for the State of Florida”  
March 21, 2002 (67 FR 13145)**

Notice is hereby given that the State of Florida is revising its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. Florida has adopted drinking water regulations for Lead and Copper and the definition of a Public Water System. EPA has determined that these sets of revisions are no less stringent than the corresponding Federal regulations. Therefore, EPA intends to approve this State program revision.

**“Arsenic Treatment Demonstrations”  
March 28, 2002 (67 FR 14951)**

EPA plans to conduct a demonstration program on the treatment (reduction and/or removal) of arsenic in drinking water. EPA recently promulgated a standard that limits arsenic concentrations in drinking water to 10 ug/l. Through this demonstration program EPA intends to identify and evaluate the ability of commercially available technologies and engineering or other approaches to cost effectively meet the new standard in small water systems (<10,000 customers). Through this notice, EPA is inviting the public at large, governmental and regulatory agencies, public health agencies, and drinking water utilities to identify small water utilities that may be interested in hosting a demonstration at their facility. Such utilities should be those which will require treatment to comply with the new arsenic standard.

## SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

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### APPENDIX B: CONTRACT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

#### Pending and Completed Actions

- A. Three senior Hotline Information Specialists attended the American Water Works Association's "Basics of Waterborne Pathogens" satellite teleconference on March 14th in Fairfax Virginia.
- B. The Safe Drinking Water Hotline Staff continues taking registrations for regional arsenic training workshops and began accepting registrations for regional SWTR training.
- C. Two senior Hotline Information Specialists attended a briefing by the US Geological Survey on "Microbial Occurrence in Public Water Supply Wells" on March 13, 2002.

#### Report on Internet Activities

The OGWDW Web site announcing EPA's Laboratory Quality Assurance Evaluation Program for Analysis of Cryptosporidium, [http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lt2/cla\\_int.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lt2/cla_int.html), lists May 1, 2002 as the deadline for comments. However, the Federal Register Notice (67 FR 9731) for this proposal lists May 3, 2002, as the deadline for comments.

The OGWDW Web site, <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/openc.html>, announcing the proposed rule titled *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Approval of Analytical Method for Aeromonas; National Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Regulations: Approval of Analytical Methods for Chemical and Microbiological Contaminants* contains a link to the proposed rule. This link only responds with an error message.