SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE

FY 2005
2nd Quarter
Report

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

In This Issue

What's New..... 1
Did You Know..... 1
Quarterly Trend..... 2
Frequently Asked Qs & As..... 3
Hotline Stats 6
Appendix A 8

Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Local Drinking Water Quality	843	16
Tap Water Testing	546**	10
Safe Drinking Water Act	398	8
Consumer Confidence Reports	293	6
Lead	259	5
MCL List	253	5
Home Water Treatment Units	220	4
Public Notification	217	4
Complaints About PWSs	178	3
Household Wells	175	3

**A total of 5,270 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in the 2nd Quarter of FY 2005.*
***Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 5 percent of the tap water testing questions.*

Calls	E-mails	Total***
2,731	164	2,895

****A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.*

Published Quarterly

See past reports at

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/hotline

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

For More Information Contact:
Harriet Hubbard, EPA Project Officer
(202) 564-4621

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

What's New

New Publications:

- Meet Thirstin and take an adventure through drinking water on the new Kids' Stuff Web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/kids.
- Eight new water security product guides are available at www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/guide.
- Information about the Drinking Water Lead Reduction Plan, including a fact sheet, summary of actions, and press release, is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrmr/lead_review.html.
- *Preventive Maintenance Card File for Small Public Water Systems Using Ground Water* (EPA816-B-04-002) guide booklet and log cards are available at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm.
- A flyer, agenda, and link for more information for the Drinking Water Academy's on-site arsenic training is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/ars/implement.html.
- A summary of the December 7, 2004, meeting to discuss lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrmr/lead_review.html.
- *Taking Stock of Your Water System: A Simple Asset Inventory for Very Small Drinking Water Systems* (EPA816-K-03-002) is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm.

Did You Know?

The average American uses about 90 gallons of water each day in the home, the average European uses 53 gallons, and the average Sub-Saharan citizen uses 3-5 gallons (EPA, Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water).

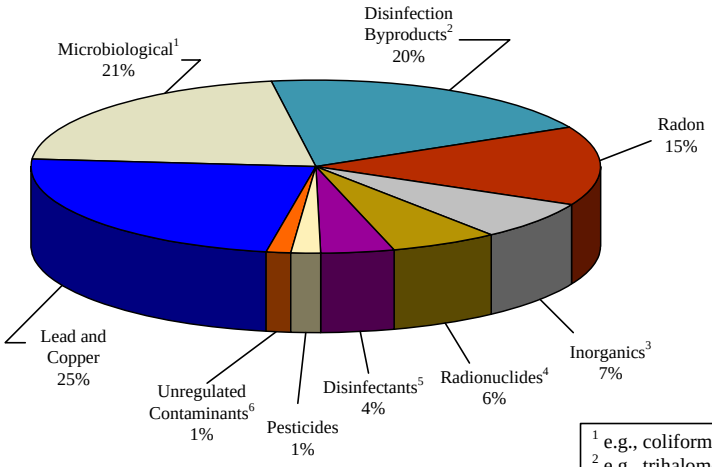
Calendar:

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	More Information
EPA	Proposed Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (DBPR) Public Meeting	Washington, DC	January 18, 2005	
NDWAC	Water Security Working Group Meeting	Phoenix, AZ	January 25-27, 2005	
NDWAC	Water Security Working Group Meeting	Arlington, VA	April 18-20, 2005	
EPA	Drinking Water Security Workshops	Various	On-going	www.epa.gov/safewater/security
DWA	SDWA Regulatory Compliance Training	Various	On-going	www.epa.gov/safewater/dwa/calendar.html

Quarterly Trend

During the first two quarters of fiscal year 2005, the Safe Drinking Water Hotline received over four hundred questions about home water treatment units (HWTUs). Although most people receive tap water that does not require treatment to make it safe, HWTU questions are consistently among the top ten topics. Approximately one-third of HWTU questions in fiscal year 2005 related to the removal of specific drinking water contaminants. Customers of community water systems (CWSs) often become concerned about specific contaminants upon receipt of consumer confidence reports detailing the presence of those contaminants, or upon receipt of public notifications about maximum contaminant level violations. Household well owners often become concerned about specific contaminants upon receipt of well water test results. Both CWS customers and household well owners, therefore, contact the Hotline to inquire whether there are HWTUs that can remove specific contaminants or whether particular HWTUs are effective in removing specific contaminants. The pie chart below presents the percentage breakdown, by contaminant, of questions regarding HWTUs for removal of specific contaminants or contaminant groups. General information and assistance with HWTU options is available through third-party product certification organizations such as NSF International, the Underwriter's Laboratories, and the Water Quality Association.

Questions Regarding HWTUs for Removal of Specific Contaminants



Frequently Asked Qs & As

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.

Q: What is the Partnership for Safe Water?

A: The Partnership for Safe Water is a unique cooperative effort between EPA, American Water Works Association (AWWA), Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), National Association of Water Companies (NAWC), and Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA). The Partnership encourages and assists water suppliers to voluntarily enhance their water systems performance for greater control of *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia* and other microbial contaminants. The Partnership has developed tools to facilitate improved performance, such as an awards program and a self-assessment procedure for the systematic analysis, identification, and correction of factors that could limit the performance of the treatment system. More information about the Partnership is available from EPA at www.epa.gov/safewater/psw/psw.html or from AWWA at www.awwa.org/science/partnership. Information about AMWA is available at www.amwa.net, NAWC is available at www.nawc.org, and ASDWA is available at www.asdwa.org.

Q: What is a cfu (i.e., colony forming unit)?

A: A colony forming unit or cfu is a cell or cluster of two or more attached sister cells capable of multiplying to form a macroscopic colony of cells (i.e., large enough to be visible to the naked eye).

Q: What causes the water in my bathtub to have a reddish-brown tint?

A: A reddish-brown tint to the water is usually associated with iron contamination. Small amounts of iron are often found in water when there is a large amount of iron present in the soil or when corrosive water picks up iron from pipes. When water containing colorless, dissolved iron is allowed to stand in a cooking container, sink, or bathtub, the iron combines with oxygen from the air to form reddish-brown particles, commonly called rust, and give the water a reddish-brown tint. Additional information regarding iron contamination in water is available at www.nesc.wvu.edu/ndwc. In order to determine whether iron contamination is causing the discoloration of your water, contact your water provider and inquire about the presence of iron in the drinking water. If you have a private household well, you may want to have your water tested for iron. You can contact your state certification officer to get a list of laboratories in your state that have been certified to test your water. A list of state certification officers is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/sco.html.

Q: How can I order documents published by EPA's Office of Water?

A: Documents can be ordered online through the Office of Water Shopping Cart Web site at yosemite.epa.gov/water/owrccatalog.nsf. Documents can also be ordered by contacting the Water Resource Center or the National Service Center for Environmental Publications through the information provided below.

US Environmental Protection Agency
Water Resource Center (RC-4100)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460
Telephone: (202) 566-1729 (24-hour voicemail)
FAX: (202) 566-1736
E-mail: center.water-resource@epa.gov

US Environmental Protection Agency
National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP)
P.O. Box 42419
Cincinnati, OH 45242
Telephone: (800) 490-9198
FAX: (513) 489-8695
E-mail: ncepimal@one.net

Q: Section 1413 of the Safe Drinking Water Act allows EPA to award primary enforcement responsibility (i.e., primacy) for the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) program to states and tribes. Which states and tribes have primacy for the PWSS program?

A: Currently, all states have primacy for the PWSS program except Wyoming and Washington, D.C. The Navajo Nation is the only tribe that has obtained primacy for the PWSS program. Additional information about primacy for the PWSS program is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/pws/primacy.htm. Information regarding tribes and the PWSS program is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/tribal/history.html.

Q: What are the lead and copper recordkeeping requirements for public water systems subject to 40 CFR Part 141, Subpart I?

A: Any system subject to the 40 CFR Part 141, Subpart I, lead and copper requirements must retain on its premises original records of all sampling data and analyses, reports, surveys, letters, evaluations, schedules, state determinations, and any other information required by 40 CFR 141.81 through 40 CFR 141.88. Water systems must retain these records for at least twelve years (40 CFR 141.91). The Subpart I requirements apply to community water systems and non-transient, non-community water systems (40 CFR 141.80(a)).

Q: Does the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) require public water systems to establish backflow prevention and cross-connection control programs?

A: The SDWA does not require public water systems to establish and maintain a backflow prevention or a cross-connection control program. However, since backflow contamination could be responsible for a water system's failure to maintain SDWA standards, EPA has published the *Cross-Connection Control Manual* (EPA816-R-03-002; February 2003) to help systems identify scenarios that are susceptible to contamination. The manual also outlines several backflow prevention techniques. The manual and additional information can be found at www.epa.gov/safewater/crossconnection.html.

Q: Can a public water system composite monitoring samples to determine compliance with the maximum contaminant levels (MCLs)?

A: States may allow the use of compositing to reduce the total number of samples that must be analyzed for both inorganic and organic chemicals. Composite samples from a maximum of five samples are allowed, provided that the detection limit of the method used for analysis is less than one-fifth of the MCL. Compositing of samples must be done in the laboratory (40 CFR 141.23(a)(4) and 40 CFR 141.24(f)(14)). For organic chemicals, compositing of samples must be analyzed within fourteen days of sample collection (40 CFR 141.24(f)(14)).

Q: Why are microorganisms such as Giardia, Legionella, and viruses regulated through a treatment technique rather than a maximum contaminant level?

A: EPA believes it is not economically or technologically feasible to measure (i.e., monitor) for Giardia, Legionella, and viruses in drinking water; therefore, EPA regulates these microorganisms using a treatment technique. EPA believes it is not feasible because water system personnel generally do not have levels of expertise required by available analytical methods; analysis by independent laboratories is generally very expensive; sample validation procedures have not yet been established; systems would have to take inordinately large numbers and frequent samples of water to ensure no significant health risk (e.g., failure to detect Giardia in one or a few samples does not provide assurance that Giardia does not occur at significant levels in the water supply); and it is not possible to assure that a monitoring program will detect the microorganisms before they actually cause or contribute to an increased risk to health (52 FR 42178, 42180; November 3, 1987).

Q: Is there a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for heterotrophic plate count (HPC) in drinking water?

A: EPA has not promulgated or proposed an MCL for HPC. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires EPA to promulgate an MCL as close to the maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) as feasible when EPA develops an MCLG for a particular contaminant (SDWA 1412(b)(4)(B)). EPA cannot specify a scientifically rational MCLG for HPC (other than zero) at which no adverse health effects occur because HPC analysis measures both pathogenic and harmless (innocuous) bacteria. Drinking water with any level of HPC might contain numerous, few, or no pathogens.

EPA considers the health benefits of complying with a bacteria concentration near zero versus some higher level (e.g., 500/mL) as unquantifiable and probably negligible. Additionally, excessive amounts of disinfectant would be needed to achieve such a level and could result in excessive levels of disinfection byproducts (which carry their own health risks) in finished drinking water. Based on these considerations, EPA did not propose an MCLG for HPC and therefore, did not propose an MCL (52 FR 42178, 42180; November 3, 1987).

Q: Has EPA promulgated a maximum contaminant level (MCL) and maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) for nickel?

A: EPA promulgated an MCL and MCLG of 0.1 mg/L for nickel on July 17, 1992 (57 FR 31776). However, in September 1992, the Nickel Development Institute challenged the methodology used to establish the MCL and MCLG in a petition to the U.S. Court of Appeals. Subsequently, EPA agreed with the challenge and filed a joint motion along with the nickel industry petitioners to voluntarily remand the MCL and MCLG on February 9, 1995. The court granted the motion and the remand became effective on the same date. All other rules pertaining to nickel, including monitoring requirements and best available treatment technology development, remain in effect. Details of the remand can be found in the June 29, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 33929).

Q: What is the relative source contribution (RSC) with regard to development of drinking water standards?

A: The RSC represents the portion of an individual's daily exposure to a contaminant attributed to drinking water. Individuals can be exposed to a contaminant through sources other than drinking water, such as food or air. EPA accounts for these other contributions when calculating the maximum contaminant level goal by incorporating the RSC into the calculation (54 FR 22062, 22069; May 22, 1989).

Q: How does EPA estimate the relative source contribution (RSC)?

A: EPA uses the following approach to estimate the RSC when calculating the maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) for a particular contaminant:

Where sufficient data are not available on the relative contribution of total exposure from each source of a contaminant, EPA estimates the drinking water contribution at twenty percent of the total daily exposure (54 FR 22062, 22069; May 22, 1989).

For drinking water contributions between eighty and one hundred percent, EPA uses an eighty percent "ceiling" (i.e., maximum drinking water contribution). The "ceiling" accounts for the possibility of unusual exposures (e.g., individuals exposed to higher than currently indicated levels of a contaminant in food) or for changes in the distribution of a contaminant in the environment. The "ceiling" provides a margin of safety for those individuals.

For drinking water contributions between twenty and eighty percent, EPA uses the actual data as the estimate for the RSC.

For drinking water contributions less than twenty percent, EPA uses a twenty percent "floor" (i.e., minimum drinking water contribution). The "floor" represents a level below which additional incremental protection is negligible. It also indicates that control of other more contaminated media (e.g., air) will have greater reduction in daily exposure (56 FR 3526, 3535; January 30, 1991).

Quarterly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	2,731
Total number of e-mails received	164
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:45
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	80.0%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	94.9%
Number of times callers were transferred to the WSC Wellcare Hotline	701
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about CCRs	497
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local drinking water quality for PWS customers	680
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing and quality for household well owners	431
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing for PWS customers	787

Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
2nd Quarter FY 2005	2,731	164
2nd Quarter FY 2004	3,253	775

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. Local Water System	421	17
2. State Lab Certification	384	16
3. EPA Internet	376	16
4. State PWSS	339	14
5. NSF/WQA/UL	200	8
6. AGWT/WSC	77	3
7. Local Public Health	76	3
8. Other Hotlines	74	3
9. Other	69	3
10. Combined Regions	62	3

**A total of 2,409 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in the 2nd Quarter of FY 2005.*

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	44	3
Citizen - Private Well	191	20
Citizen - PWS	1,684	98
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	172	17
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	62	2
Environmental Groups	6	0
EPA	56	1
Other Federal Agency	17	1
Government, Local	16	1
Government, State	49	5
Government, Tribal	1	0
Spanish Speaking	5	0
International	3	3
Media	3	0
Medical Professional	22	1
Public Water System	202	7
Schools/University	64	2
Other	134	3
TOTALS	2,731	164

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	56	4
Coliforms	141	3
Cryptosporidium	49	0
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	77	5
Disinfection – Home Water	20	5
Other Microbials	37	5
Storage – Home Water	6	0
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	49	1
Trihalomethane (THM)	59	4
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	29	3
Fluoride	37	0
Methyl-*tertiary*-butyl-ether (MTBE)	11	0
Perchlorate	20	0
Phase I, II & V	44	7
Sodium Monitoring	8	0
Sulfate	1	0
Lead and Copper		
Copper	42	2
Lead	257	2
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	21	0
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	45	4
Radionuclides (Radon)	118	1
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	82	6
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	38	6
MCL List	236	17
Other Background	59	11
SDWA	381	17
Water on Tap	3	0
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	62	8
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	20	0
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	292	1
DW Primacy (PWS)	62	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	14	0
Other Drinking Water Security	33	1
Public Notification (PWS)	216	1
Security Planning Grants	1	1
State Revolving Fund (DW)	8	1
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	16	0
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	5	1
Bottled Water	101	11
Complaints about PWS	176	2
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	43	0
Home Water Treatment Units	208	12
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	13	5
Local DW Quality	832	11
Tap Water Testing	538	8
Treatment/BATs (DW)	24	7
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	24	0
Sole Source Aquifer	4	2
Source Water/Wellhead Protection	46	5
UIC Program	38	4
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	171	4
Non-Environmental	36	3
Non-EPA Environmental	40	4
Other EPA (Programs)	115	11
TOTALS	5,064	206

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

NOTICES

"National Drinking Water Advisory Council's Water Security Working Group Meeting Announcement"
January 10, 2005 (70 FR 1707)

EPA announced the fourth public meeting of the Water Security Working Group (WSWG) of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council. The meeting was scheduled for January 25-27, 2005 in Phoenix, Arizona. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an opportunity for the WSWG members to continue deliberations on principles and program elements for drinking water and wastewater security programs.

"Promoting Water Conservation in Multi-Family Housing"
January 11, 2005 (70 FR 1892)

EPA sought comments on water metering and billing systems that promote full cost and conservation pricing to achieve water conservation within the drinking water industry. The agency also sought information on ways that residential and commercial water users and drinking water utilities can reduce water use and promote water conservation. The deadline for receipt of comments was March 14, 2005.

"Guidelines Establishing Test Procedures for the Analysis of Pollutants Under the Clean Water Act; National Primary Drinking Water Regulations; Notice of Data Availability"
February 16, 2005 (70 FR 7909)

On April 6, 2004, EPA proposed to approve a number of new analytical methods for measuring pollutants in wastewater and drinking water, and proposed to withdraw approval of Syngenta Method AG-625 for determination of atrazine by immunoassay. This action announced the availability of new data regarding these changes and updates to three proposed methods. EPA solicited comment only on the data and methods updates cited in this notice.

"Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List 2; Final Notice"
February 24, 2005 (70 FR 9071)

The second draft CCL (CCL 2), published on April 2, 2004 (69 FR 17406), announced EPA's preliminary decision to carry forward the remaining fifty-one contaminants on the 1998 CCL as the draft CCL 2. The final CCL 2 carries forward the remaining fifty-one contaminants from the draft CCL 2 proposed on April 2, 2004.

"Public Water System Supervision Program Revision for the State of LA"
March 2, 2005 (70 FR 10002)

EPA gave notice of approval of the state of Louisiana's revisions to its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. Louisiana has revised its variance and exemption regulation and

adopted the interim enhanced surface water treatment regulation, the disinfectants/disinfection by-products regulation, and the lead and copper minor revisions regulation. EPA has determined that these revisions are no less stringent than the corresponding federal regulations.

"National Drinking Water Advisory Council's Water Security Working Group Teleconference Announcement"
March 21, 2005 (70 FR 13499)

EPA announced the second public teleconference of the Water Security Working Group (WSWG) of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC), which was established under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The purpose of this teleconference is to provide an opportunity for the WSWG members to continue deliberations on their draft report and recommendations on features of active and effective security programs for the water sector (drinking water and wastewater utilities), including incentives to encourage broad adoption of active and effective security programs and measures to track the performance of water security programs. The teleconference will be open to the public by advance registration; an opportunity for public comment will be provided during that time. The teleconference was scheduled for April 7, 2005.