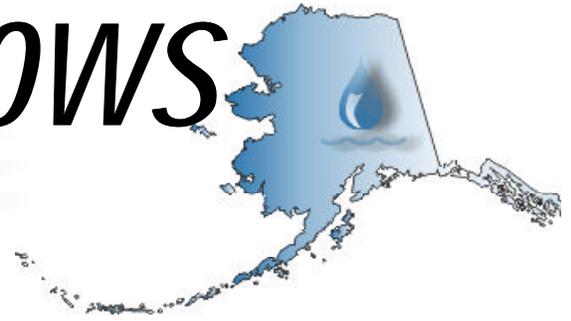


Northern Flows



Alaska's Drinking Water & Wastewater Program Newsletter

Issue 1 • Winter 1999

Welcome To *Northern Flows!*

Owners and operators of Public Water Systems and wastewater systems in the State of Alaska are an important part of keeping Alaska a safe and healthy place to live and visit. To offer you better access to current issues in the water and wastewater field, the Drinking Water and Wastewater Program has prepared this information for distribution to the owners and operators of public water systems and wastewater treatment systems as well as the general public.

This is the first issue of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Program's newsletter. This newsletter is designed to provide information on public health, technical and regulatory issues affecting drinking water quality and domestic wastewater treatment, storage, and disposal issues and activities. We welcome your suggestions for future newsletter articles. Please share your suggestions with Susan Randlett at 907-269-3075 or James Weise at 907-269-7647.

James Weise, DGS
Drinking Water and Wastewater Program Manager

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Does the new Consumer Confidence Report Rule apply to you?

Is your water system one of approximately 470 in Alaska affected by the new Federal requirement to prepare and distribute a Consumer Confidence Report on the quality of your water for calendar year 1998?

If you regularly serve the same 25 people or have 15 residential service connections, you need to know what a Consumer Confidence Report is, and make plans for preparing one to be distributed to your customers this year. If you see "CWS" (Community Water System) on your newsletter mailing label you will need to fill out a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).

The purpose of the report is to inform the water customers and consumers of the quality of their water, and any violations of drinking water regulations that have occurred. The content of the report is specified in a new federal regulation published August 19, 1998. The first report must be completed and distributed by community public water systems by October 1999. Water wholesalers must distribute information to their customers by April 1999.

There were approximately
188,700 Public Water Systems
across the U.S. in 1997.

Printed on recycled paper

Q & A about Consumer Confidence Reports

Which PWSs need to write a report?

Class A Public Water Systems (PWS) serving at least 25 year-round residents, or have at least 15 service connections year-round. (Look for "CWS" on your mailing label.)

Who receives the report?

A report must be provided to every customer. Small systems may request an alternative to mailing the report. The report must also be mailed to the ADEC DW/WW Program; 555 Cordova St, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, with a certification that the report was sent to consumers.

When is the report due?

The first report must be distributed by the PWS to its customers by October 19, 1999. In future years, the annual report will need to be sent to the State and customers by July 1st of the following year.

What needs to be in the report?

- ◆ Name of the raw water source
- ◆ Any regulated contaminants found in the water and the concentration allowed
- ◆ Health effects of any contaminants found
- ◆ Any violations of monitoring, reporting, record-keeping etc., that happened in 1998 and how the violations were addressed
- ◆ How to contact the system owner and/or operator

Where can I get information on the requirements?

Call EPA's Hotline: 1-800-426-4791, 5am to 1:30pm Alaska Time. EPA's Alaska contact for CCR is Bill Gissel, (907) 586-7620.

Why is a report required?

When customers know what their water quality is, they can make informed choices about their drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996 required EPA to establish a regulation that defines how water utilities inform their customers of their water quality.

When will the report be a State requirement?

DEC will adopt a CCR rule between calendar years 2000 and 2001. Until that time, water system owners must work directly with EPA on the Consumer Confidence Report requirements.

Who can help prepare a report?

EPA expects to have a template and instructions ready by March 1999. The National Rural Water Association has published a template in their magazine that meets most regulatory requirements. Call 1-580-252-0629 for a copy of the 1998 3rd qtr Rural Water magazine, cost is \$1.00. American Water Works Association also has a \$75 template that is available on the internet at: <http://www.CCRbuilder.com>

Hints for Writing Confidence

The hardest part of doing the report will be starting. Most of the required wording is provided in the Consumer Confidence Regulation. As the owner/operator, your role is to combine the history of your systems' violations and contaminants with specific text provided in the regulation. The report also gives you an opportunity to promote good customer relations.

Some associations (American WaterWorks Association & National Rural Water Association) sell "template" material to guide owners and operators in writing a report. Most of you will likely meet the requirement by filling out one of these templates with information from your files, mailing it to all your customers, and submitting a certification that it was distributed.

The following are suggestions on what strategies might work best for you:

If they are not well organized, try this:

- ◆ Group lab reports from 1998 together. Circle any positive results (those that are not zero or NonDetect (ND))
- ◆ Group lab reports from 1993-1997 in another pile. Circle the positive results.
- ◆ Group any letters about violations in 1998 from DEC in a third pile.

Writing a Consumer Report

If you saved all your lab reports and letters:

You have enough information on hand to prepare a report using a template. You may want to wait for EPA's free template. It should be available in March 1999 by calling the hotline, 1-800-426-4791 between 5am and 1:30pm Alaska time. Or: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/cr1.html>

If you are missing records:

Violations: After several months, EPA posts all water system violations on the internet at: →

Lab Tests: You may also be able to get duplicate test results from your laboratory. Contact your laboratory for this information.

Violations & Lab Tests: DEC Drinking Water staff may be able to research your system history. The fee for this service has not been established yet.

If you don't have a computer, but your records are complete:

Use a template as a tool to hand write or "cut and paste" your final report.

If you are not comfortable with math:

You may find the unit conversions that the federal rule requires confusing. Most reports will require some conversions of units (parts per million into parts per billion, for example) to indicate the concentration of contaminants found. You can contact the EPA hotline for assistance.

Regulations In The Pipeline

Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (IESWTR)

By December 2002, water systems using surface water and serving over 10,000 people will be required to meet a higher treatment standard. The IESWTR is intended to reduce pathogens such as

Cryptosporidium in treated water. (In 1993 over 403,000 people in Milwaukee,

WI, suffered intestinal illness from *Cryptosporidium*; over 4,000 people were hospitalized, and approximately 100 died from Cryptosporidiosis.)

Also, in 2002, *all* Class "A" and "B" surface water systems will be required to filter more carefully and completely. In addition, sanitary surveys will be required every *three* years for all community water systems using surface water.

EPA believes the IESWTR will increase water quality and reduce the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks. Work is ongoing to develop the long term ESWTR, due to be published November, 2000.

Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection By-products Rule (D/DBP)

In December 1998, EPA announced the D/DBP Rule. This rule will, in time, apply to all Class A water systems using a chemical disinfectant such as chlorine. The rule establishes

additional testing and maximum concentrations of disinfection by-products in treated water.

Are you ready for Y2K? If not, make plans now for how you will bypass any electronic equipment that might not work next New Year's while repairs are pending.

Compliance Schedules

By 2001, systems > 10,000 people
By 2003, all Class "A" PWSs

The purpose of the rule is to reduce the health risk from chemicals produced during disinfection.

The MCLs will be:

DBP	
Haloacetic acids	50ug/l
Chlorite	1000ug/l
Bromate	10ug/l
Trihalomethanes	80ug/l

A stage 2 D/DBP rule is also being developed.

For more information on new federal rules, call EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1 (800) 426-4791, between 5am and 1:30pm Alaska time, or see the EPA web page at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw/>

http://www.epa.gov/9966/envirodcd/owa/sdw_form.create_page?state_abbr=AK

Training!!!

For information about up-and-coming training go to: <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water/>

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Drinking Water and Wastewater Program
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*"In 1995, the U.S. had a population of about 267 million. Approximately 225 million people had their water delivered from a public water supply system."
- U.S. Geological Survey*