

Summer 2009
Volume 2, Issue 1

CONSUMER NOTICE OF TAP WATER LEAD RESULTS

Beginning in July, all community and nontransient noncommunity public water systems will be required to provide notice of tap water lead monitoring results to all served by the sampling site, regardless of whether the sample exceeds the lead action level. Notice must be provided by mail or other approved method as soon as practical, but no more than **30 days** from when the results were received.

Consumer notices must include:

- the results of the tap water lead monitoring,
- an explanation of lead health effects,
- steps consumers can take to reduce exposure,
- facility contact information, and
- definitions for Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG) and Action Level (AL).

This new requirement is part of state rule revisions made to adopt U.S. EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Short-Term Revisions. Ohio's revisions are expected to become effective in July 2009. The action levels will remain at 0.015 milligrams per liter (mg/L) for lead and 1.3 mg/L for copper.

The revisions also change the mandatory language, content and delivery of public education, and require a new lead information statement to be included in the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) regardless of lead levels. Additional changes deal with lead line replacement reevaluation, notification requirements for treatment and source changes, and monitoring revisions for systems with fewer than five taps for human consumption.

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HELPFUL TIPS FOR OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

Exam Applications

Following these tips can help ensure operator certification exam applications are processed accurately and efficiently:

- Fill out all of the boxes on the exam application.
- Provide a detailed description of operating experience, as defined in Ohio Administrative Code rule 3745-7-01(K).
- Be consistent from one exam cycle to the next. It is helpful to keep a copy of your application for future reference.
- Include attachments (such as course certificates, transcript copies, etc.) when attempting to use education in lieu of “hands on” experience.
- Ensure a Declaration of Material Assistance (DMA) form is included with all drinking water-related applications. The form is available online at www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/HLS_0036_Licenses.pdf.
- Submit applications early.

If you fail to renew your certification by December 31, your certificate is expired and you can not be an Operator of Record.

2009 WATER EXAM DATES & DEADLINES

November 5, 2009
(application due
August 7, 2009)

MINIMUM STAFFING REMINDER

On **July 1, 2009**, minimum staffing requirements for the operator of record will become effective for all public water systems.

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Renewal Applications

Renewal applications are sent in August of each year for certificates scheduled to expire. The due date for renewal applications is November 30. To ensure you receive your renewal card prior to the December 31 expiration date, Ohio EPA recommends you:

- Return your renewal application upon receipt.
- Ensure courses related to operations and maintenance (OM) and other (X) are separated.
- Ensure at least 50 percent of your contact hours are in the OM category.
- Ensure a Declaration of Material Assistance (DMA) form is included with all drinking water-related applications.

If you fail to renew your certification by December 31, your certificate is expired and you can not be an Operator of Record.

For more information, please call the hotline 1-866-411-OPCT (6728) or visit www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.html.

PREPARING FOR THE GROUND WATER RULE

Beginning December 1, 2009, every public water system (PWS) in the United States using ground water as a source will be affected by U.S. EPA's Ground Water Rule (GWR). The purpose of the GWR is to increase protection against the presence of fecal bacteria and viruses in drinking water supplied by PWSs using ground water.

Most of Ohio's small PWSs will be required to monitor their raw water for *E. coli* after a sample taken under the Total Coliform Rule (TCR) is determined to be positive. This raw water monitoring is called triggered source water monitoring since monitoring is *triggered* by a routine positive TCR sample. Your specific GWR sampling requirements will depend on the configuration of your water system and the complexity of treatment provided.

- If you are a community or noncommunity water system that provides treatment, and you have a routine positive TCR sample, you will be required to collect a minimum of one triggered source water monitoring sample **BEFORE** treatment, in addition to repeat samples required under the TCR. You may need to look at the configuration of your water supply plumbing to ensure that an adequate sampling tap is available so samples can be collected that are representative of your well(s) or raw water.
- If you are a noncommunity system serving fewer than 1,000 people that does not provide treatment, and you have a routine positive TCR sample, your four repeat samples required for the TCR may satisfy the triggered source water monitoring sample requirements of the GWR, but you may need to collect the samples at specific locations.



Electron micrograph of E. coli bacteria

If the triggered source water monitoring sample is positive for *E. coli*, you must consult with Ohio EPA to identify appropriate corrective actions and then complete the identified corrective actions.

While Ohio's rules will not be in place by December 1, 2009, **all PWSs will still be required to meet the requirements under the Federal rule.** Ohio EPA plans to notify affected PWSs in the next few months and will be tracking all samples and requirements for the GWR. Additional information will be provided when Ohio EPA notifies you about your GWR requirements. If you have questions, you can contact your local representative on the Ohio EPA GWR workgroup: Bob Moore (Southwest District), Eric Hart (Southeast District), Donn Meehl (Northeast District), Jill Schiefer (Northwest District) and Jose Quinones (Central District). You can also visit the Ohio EPA Web site at www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw for more information as it becomes available.

Ohio EPA Spigot News ~ Small Systems Corner

NEW LICENSING RULES

Public water systems are required to have a license to operate their water systems. To help the public and other licensing agencies better understand the compliance status of public water systems, Ohio EPA will begin issuing color-coded licenses in 2010.

Green means a license was issued without conditions. Yellow is a conditioned license, which means the water system has violations and needs to comply with specific requirements as part of the license. A red sign means the water system does not have a license and is not permitted to produce water. You will be required to notify the public of the status of your license. Ohio EPA plans to post the status of all public water systems on its Web site, as well as find other ways to notify the public.

Ohio EPA will begin reviewing the compliance of public water systems this year and conditioning the licenses of non-compliant systems in 2010. We will soon begin outreach efforts to warn those public water systems that will receive a conditioned license for 2010 if they do not return to compliance. If you receive notification from Ohio EPA about your non-compliance, you may receive a conditioned license (yellow). The conditioned license will require you to comply with Ohio EPA rules, may contain a penalty for past violations, and will remain conditioned for all of 2010. If you comply with the conditions of a conditioned license, you will receive an unconditioned license (green) for 2011.

Ohio EPA will notify health departments, liquor boards, daycare licensing and other agencies of public water systems with conditioned licenses. Most licenses for your business require you to

comply with state drinking water requirements and have an approved source. Continued non-compliance will lead to a suspended or revoked license, which will jeopardize food, liquor and other licenses. If Ohio EPA suspends or revokes your license to operate (red), your system will be considered unapproved and we will work with other agencies to remove your other licenses.

What can you do to prevent this? Perform all required and follow-up monitoring. If you have trouble remembering to do your monitoring, it may be a good idea to contract with an operator or laboratory to assist you. If you receive a notice of violation, contact your district representative to find out how to return to compliance. Heed the warnings from Ohio EPA. If we let you know you are on the path for a conditioned license, take action to get back into compliance as soon as possible. If you receive a conditioned license, comply with the requirements contained in it.

FREE UPCOMING TRAINING

Ohio EPA has partnered with the Ohio Rural Water Association (ORWA) and Ohio Manufactured Homes Association (OMHA) to provide **FREE TRAINING** to small community public system owners and operators. The training is approved for 6 O&M contact hours, and will be offered between June and August in locations across Ohio. For more information or to register, visit our Web site at www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/ or contact Wesley Croft from ORWA at (740) 334-0590 or wcroft82@hotmail.com.

LEARN FROM EACH OTHER: BE DILIGENT!

Recently, the Village of Overlook inadvertently fed hydrochloric acid instead of hydrofluorosilicic acid into its water supply. The error occurred when the operator picked up the wrong container from the chemical supplier, and nobody noticed the discrepancy. The wrong chemical was fed for about a day. In the meantime, water plant employees increased the feed rate in an attempt to counter steadily decreasing fluoride levels (it didn't work).

After realizing the error, the water system issued a system-wide no use water advisory, and received a lot of unwanted media attention.

This error could have been avoided with the right amount of diligence on the part of the operator. Always check the paperwork against the labels on containers during each and every step of the process.

This is also a reminder that public water system operators hold an important position in their communities. The job requires the use of intelligence, intuition and integrity on a daily basis.

Have a hard-learned lesson you would like to share with others? Submit it to Holly Kaloz at holly.kaloz@epa.state.oh.us.

RULE-MAKING ACTIVITIES

We know keeping up to date on rule changes is challenging, so here is a brief summary of recent and upcoming changes. Get more details, including notice of opportunities to comment on draft rules, by signing up for our electronic mailing list or visiting us on the Web at www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw.

Recently adopted

- License to operate, effective 4/1/09

Coming soon

- Lead and copper, expect to be effective summer 2009
- Well standards, expect to be effective summer 2009
- Disadvantaged community loans, expect to be effective summer 2009
- Plan approval, expect to be effective summer/fall 2009
- Laboratory certification, expect to be effective summer/fall 2009
- Stage 2 D/DBP and LT2ESWTR, expect to be effective fall 2009

In the works

- Radionuclide monitoring, expect to be effective winter 2009
- Ground water rule, expect to be effective fall 2010 (implementation under federal rule begins 12/1/09)



Answer Place

Have questions?
Need help?
Click here to visit
the Answer Place.

DEAR ANSWER PLACE:

How do we meet minimum staffing requirements while our Operator of Record is on vacation?

— Gone Fishin'

DEAR FISHIN':

The operator of record of a class II, III or IV public water system can be replaced by a backup operator with a certificate one classification lower than the public water system's classification for up to 30 consecutive days. Class A and I water systems can partner with other local facilities to use each other as backups.

— Answer Place

HAVE A QUESTION FOR ANSWER PLACE?

You can search for answers or ask a new question at <http://ohioepa.custhelp.com>.

OHIO EPA'S SPIGOT NEWS

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24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE

For emergencies occurring after
5 p.m. or on a weekend or holiday,
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OhioEPA

CONSUMER NOTICE *Continued from page 1*

More information can be found on U.S. EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrmr/index.html or by contacting Ken Baughman at (614) 644-2752 or kenneth.baughman@epa.state.oh.us.

OUR WEB SITE IS GETTING A FACE LIFT!

Ohio EPA is redesigning its Web site and hopes to unveil the new design this summer. The new site will have both a new look and improved navigation.

Visit our new site to search or browse for information, subscribe to this newsletter and other free electronic mailing lists, ask questions in the Answer Place, and provide feedback.

The Web site address is also changing to www.epa.ohio.gov. We will be working hard to make this transition happen smoothly, but it is likely you may encounter some broken links. If you find one, please contact Susan Baughman at (614) 644-2752 or susan.baughman@epa.state.oh.us.
