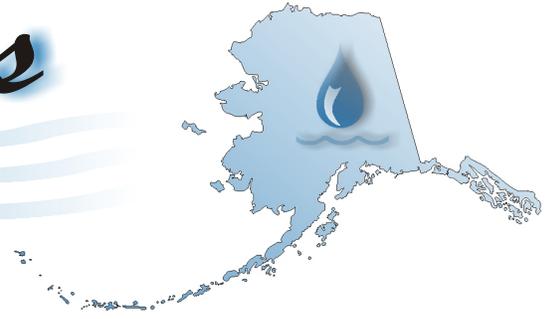


Northern Flows



Alaska's Drinking Water & Wastewater Program Newsletter

Issue 7 • Spring 2001

Message from the Manager

Springtime is rapidly approaching. The days are both warmer and longer, and everyone is busy planning summer activities. For utility owners and managers, the short construction season is also rapidly approaching. If you plan on modifying a public water system or a wastewater treatment and disposal system in any way this season, now is the time to get your engineered plans into the local Drinking Water and Wastewater (DW/WW) program office for review and approval.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Program staff have also been busy this spring. We've sent compliance monitoring schedules to public water system (PWS) owners and operators, and reminders about operation requirements to PWS's that only operate seasonally. We are also working to ensure PWS's schedule

sanitary surveys with ADEC-approved third party inspectors.

Similar to past years, this year promises to be a busy and challenging one. We are finalizing the adoption of the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule and Phase 1 of the Disinfectants/Disinfection By-Products Rule. We are also working on regulatory language for Administrative Penalties.

In regard to new federal rules, we have several interesting events happening. EPA promulgated the Arsenic Rule on January 22, 2001. This rule set the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic at 10 parts per billion (ppb), which is significantly less than the previous MCL of 50 ppb. The science behind this new MCL is now being reconsidered by EPA during a 60-day review. The Radon Rule and the Ground Water Rule are scheduled to be finalized in late 2001, possibly early 2002, depending on what happens with the Arsenic Rule.

Additionally, we have workshops planned across the state. At least five Certified Installer workshops and four Sanitary Survey classes are planned for the year. We are also offering six workshops on source water assessments for PWS owners and operators that are scheduled to be completed by July 2001. Additional workshops will be offered as requested and as staff and time

allow. To date, Drinking Water Protection Program (DWPP) staff have completed 16 PWS Assessments. These reports are available on our website at: →

This year, we are also filling several key vacancies. We are recruiting for hydrologists and a coordinator in the DWPP, as well as an engineer in the Anchorage engineering group. We are also recruiting for the South-central DW/WW Program Coordinator. This vacancy is the result of Susan Bulkow leaving the DW/WW Program. We wish Susan and her family much happiness and the best in all their future endeavors.

Lastly, the Alaska Drinking Water Advisory Committee continues to develop, slowly, but progressively. I have received information from several interested individuals and have their names on my participants list. I'm creating some guidance materials and plan on having the inaugural meeting in July 2001. As noted in past newsletters, if you're interested in participating, contact me at (907) 269-7647, or send me an E-mail.

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<http://info.dec.state.ak.us/en/dwpp/complete.asp>

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Operator Certification Program

As of January 18, 2001, all Class A public water systems (community and non-transient non-community systems) and Class B public water systems (transient, non-community systems) using a surface water or groundwater-under-the-direct-influence-of-surface-water source, will be required to have a certified operator, regardless of size.

The new public water system Operator Certification Program divides public water systems into three different classifications. These are based on **size, treatment, and treatment complexity:**

- ◆ **small-untreated water systems,**
- ◆ **small-treated water systems, and**
- ◆ **large water systems.**

Small-untreated water systems are Class A and B public water systems that serve less than 500 individuals and have fewer than 100 service connections and do not add chemicals to the water. This classification includes systems that use only "passive treatment" methods, such as cartridge filters, UV disinfection, and ion exchange water softeners. The main issue with these types of systems is that while there may be passive water treatment involved, there are no chemicals added. To certify small-untreated system operators, ADEC is using two methods:

- ◆ during the onsite sanitary survey, when the operator would be evaluated by the inspector, or
- ◆ through a written exam specific to small-untreated systems.

We will have both options available by May 1, 2001.

Small-treated water systems are Class A and B public water systems that serve less than 500 individuals and have fewer than 100 service connections and add one chemical to the water. If the system uses any of the passive treatments previously noted and adds only one chemical, the system is "small-treated".



Training materials and exams specifically for "small-treated" water systems will be developed in 2002.

A small-treated public water system may be classified as a large water system (only for certification purposes), if ADEC determines that the water system operation involves a complex water treatment process such as coagulation, chemically-aided filtration, membrane filtration, or chemicals to accomplish multiple water treatment processes.

Large water systems are public water systems that serve 500 or more individuals or, have 100 or more service connections. These systems are broken down into the same four levels (Levels I through IV) which existed before. Every large public water system is required to have an operator certified to operate that level of system under the existing program.

Certification

Operators of small-untreated and small-treated public water systems who wish to be certified now, can take existing exams. Courses accepted for Operator Certification of small-untreated and small-treated systems are:

- ◆ The Water Distribution Operator-in-Training (WD OIT) certification exam or the Water Treatment Operator-in-Training (WT OIT) certification exam. See Training Calendar for application deadlines and test dates: →
- ◆ Introduction to Small Water Systems course and the WD OIT exam at the end of the course. See Training Calendar for course locations and dates: →

System owners can apply for a two-year "grandparent" certificate for operators who were operating the system on or before January 18, 2001. A public water system owner who applies for, and is issued, a "grandparent" certificate for their operator must remember that the certificate will only last until January 18, 2003. At that time, all "grandparented" operators will need to become certified. Also, ADEC may determine that a grandparented operator needs to become certified sooner to protect public health and safety.

If you would like more information, please call Kerry Lindley with Facilities Construction and Operation at (907) 465-5143 or Keven Kleweno with the Drinking Water and Wastewater Program at (907) 269-7696. The complete text of the newly revised Operator Certification regulations (18 AAC 74) can be found on the web at: →

Arsenic and You

Does your Class A Public Water System (PWS) have 10 ppb or more of Arsenic in the water you provide to customers? The good news in the Federal Register of January 22, 2001 is that water systems have until January 23, 2006 to comply with the reduced Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). The bad news is that of the 4,100 water systems nationwide exceeding the future MCL of 10 ppb, over 100 are in Alaska.

"Some people who drink arsenic [in drinking water] in excess of the MCL over many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer."

That's the public health summary that EPA will require community water systems with a detection level higher than 25 ppb provide in a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) to their customers by July 1, 2001. Next year, the action level for this information to be included in the annual CCR will be 5 ppb.

What Do I Need to Do?

First, know what the concentration of arsenic is in the drinking water being provided to your customers. Second, communication with your customers is important. People will be more supportive of your actions if they are informed about the arsenic level in the water, and angry if information is delayed. If a treatment upgrade may

be needed, making an immediate upgrade may be premature. The step you can take now is finding out how to finance an upgrade and which treatment process is most appropriate for your system. There has been a congressional proposal to nullify the new Arsenic MCL until further research is complete. Removing arsenic will likely become less expensive as more water systems gain experience with treatment methods. Remember, any public water system modifications require ADEC approval to construct or operate before modifications can occur.

You can get information on Arsenic at: _____
or by calling Susan Randlett at (907) 269-3075. ~

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic.html>

Septic System Installation, Inspection & Maintenance

Do you own a septic system or are you planning on putting one in? ADEC will soon be unveiling a new CD that trains homeowners to install, inspect, and maintain septic systems. This interactive CD walks you through three sections: 1) Before You Start, 2) Septic System Design and, 3) Septic System Installation. Each section explains everything you need to know to properly install your own personal use on-lot system in Alaska. At the end of each section, you will take a short test. Once you've answered all the questions correctly, you print a letter that states you have completed the training. You then

mail a copy of this letter to ADEC with the required fee, and are approved to install your system for one year. Before you start construction you are also required to contact the closest ADEC office

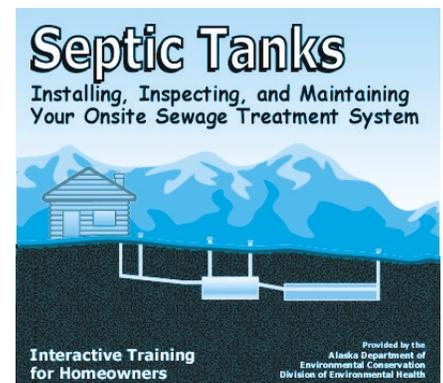
and inform them of your plans. Once construction is complete, you can print the construction documentation form from the CD and mail it to ADEC confirming the completion of your project.



If you do not own a computer just go to your closest ADEC office and take the training there.

The CD also contains two sections for owners of existing on-lot treatment systems. One section explains how to inspect your system to make sure it's functioning properly - something that should be done yearly. The second section provides useful tips about the operation and maintenance of your system so it lasts longer and operates effectively.

The CD will be available starting May 10th. If you would like a copy, contact Margaret French at (907) 262-5210, ext. 223 or E-mail her at Margaret_French@envircon.state.ak.us.~



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Important Information



For Water Operators and Owners

Northern Flows

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