Consumer Confidence Report Rule

What Should Owners and Operators Know About the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Requirement

By July 2000, customers of community water systems will receive their second annual report on drinking water quality. The State of Alaska will adopt this federal regulation in August 2000. This fact sheet is designed to introduce water system owners and operators to the requirement, and explain how to write a simple report.

What is a CCR?

In 1996, Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act. It added a provision requiring that all community water systems deliver to their customers a brief annual water quality report. CCRs summarize information that your water system already collects to comply with regulations. The CCR includes information on your source water, the levels of any detected contaminants, and compliance with drinking water rules, plus some educational material. Most reports will fit on a few sheets of paper.

What information should a CCR include?

While water systems are free to enhance their reports in any useful way, each report must provide consumers with the following fundamental information about their drinking water:

- the lake, river, aquifer, or other source of the drinking water;
- a brief summary of the susceptibility to contamination of the local drinking water source, based on the source water assessments that Alaska will complete over the next five years;
- how to get a copy of the water system's complete source water assessment;
- the level (or range of levels) of any contaminant found in local drinking water, as well as ADEC's health-based standard (maximum contaminant level) for comparison;
- the likely source of that contaminant in the local drinking water supply;
- the potential health effects of any contaminant detected in violation of ADEC's health standard, and an accounting of the system's actions to restore safe drinking water;
- the water system's compliance with other drinking water-related rules;
- an educational statement for vulnerable populations about avoiding Cryptosporidium;
- educational information on nitrate, arsenic, or lead in areas where these contaminants are detected above 50% of ADEC's standard; and
- phone numbers of additional sources of information, including the water system and EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

An example of a simple CCR is included in this fact sheet, with notes in the margin to explain what parts are required, and which are optional.

Why is a CCR 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.

Which water systems have to write a CCR?

Class A public water systems serving at least 25 year-round residents, or having at least 15 service connections to year-round residents.

How do I distribute the CCR?

A CCR must be provided to every customer. The CCR must also be sent to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Drinking Water Program, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

A certification must be sent to ADEC stating that the CCR was distributed, and that the contaminant information is consistent with values previously reported to ADEC.

When must a PWS distribute its CCR?

The second CCR, covering the calendar year 1999, is due July 1, 2000. If the first year was missed, 1998 contaminant and violation information should be included in a separate table. The certification is due to ADEC within 3 months after distribution of the report.

Systems over 10,000 persons have special distribution requirements. Contact EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline or ADEC for more information.

Where can I get help writing a CCR?

ADEC Web site: http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water/ccr.htm
Brad Ault, NRWA Alaska Training Specialist (907) 694-6792, email: aknrwa@gci.net.

What should the CCR look like?

You don't need a fancy computer or a graphic designer to produce a CCR that is easy to read and inviting to your customers. The best way to design your report is to spend some time looking at other reports. See what catches your eye, and copy it. A few things to consider:

- Write short sentences, and keep paragraphs short.
- Don't make text too small. You might want to squeeze a few extra sentences in your CCR, but too much can discourage people from reading the report.
- Don't distract from your main message with graphics and/or pictures that don't compliment your message.
- Be as simple and straight forward as possible. Avoid acronyms, initials, and jargon.
- Ask a friend who is not a drinking water expert to read a draft of the report and see if it makes sense.

These two pages show a basic CCR. The information requirements are noted with italics and numbers, and explained in the margin.

1999 Example Water Quality Report

We're very pleased to provide you with this year's Quality Water Report. We want to keep you informed about the water and services we have delivered to you over the past year. Our goal is to provide to you a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. Distributing this report is a new, annual, federal requirement.

Our present water source is ❶*surface water from Goldpan Creek*. There is a project in progress to upgrade the water system and its source. If you have any questions about this report or your water utility, please contact ❷*John Doe at (907)555-5555*.

The example Public Water System monitors your drinking water for contaminants according to Federal and State laws. The table on the next page shows that all of our monitoring between ❸January 1st to December 31st, 1999, or the most recent test where noted, found the water is within allowable levels.

❹*Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. Guidelines on reducing the risk of infection from microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).*

❺*As water travels over the land or underground, it can pick up substances or contaminants such as microbes, inorganic and organic chemicals, and radioactive substances. We test the water to check for contamination that could be found in water, including:*

- *Microbial contamination, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from septic tanks, sewage treatment, and wildlife;*
- *Inorganic Contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or the result of stormwater runoff;*
- *Organic chemical contaminants, which can include fuel products; and*
- *Radioactive contaminants, from naturally occurring deposits.*

❻All drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily pose a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

❶**Source of Water:** type, name, and location of water sources
❷**Name/phone** of contact person

❸Use calendar-year data from previous calendar year.

❹ Educational statements**. The Rule requires these to be included** in exactly these words.

❺The report must contain basic information about drinking water contaminants. Use this language or write equivalent material that better fits your specific local situation

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RESULTS OF MONITORING FOR REGULATED CONTAMINANTS

We test for many regulated contaminants. The table shows the only ones detected at any level. This table shows all testing completed between ❸January 1st to December 31st, 1999, or the most recent test where noted, found the water is within allowable levels.

❼Contaminant	Level Detected	Units Measured In	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Inorganic Contaminants					
Nitrate (1999)	0.1	ppm	10	10	Erosion of natural deposits or sewage
Fluoride (1994)	1.2	ppm	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (1995)**	2.0	ppm	Action level is 1.3 ppm; three of 10 samples were over 1.3		Corrosion of indoor plumbing
Lead (1995)	9.8	ppb	Action level is 15 ppb; one of ten samples was 15 ppb		Corrosion of indoor plumbing
Organic Contaminants					
Coliform	1	-	0	One positive sample per month	Naturally present in environment
Turbidity	2 (range 0-4)	NTU	-	TT	Soil runoff

❽**MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level)** means the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

❽**MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal)** means the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

❾**AL = Action Level** means the concentration of a contaminant, which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

❾**TT = Treatment Technique.** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

❽**ppb** means parts per billion

❽**ppm**: means parts per million

Information about regulatory violations

❿All of our testing shows that the water meets state and federal regulations for drinking water quality. ❿Three regulatory violations were for these delayed or missing tests: 1) the monthly test for coliform bacteria in September 1999; 2) The test for thallium, nickel, cyanide, beryllium, and antimony was due December 1998 but not done until August 1999; and 3) not testing turbidity in January 1999. The health affects of these delayed tests are unknown.

****About our Copper Level:** Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water that contains copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal doctor.

❼Table of Contaminants. If the contaminant was found on the most recent test, report it. Consider a five year period in looking for the most recent test.

Wherever the level found exceeds the action level or the MCL, include health effects language. Call the SDWA Hotline or your ADEC Drinking Water Specialist for the correct wording.

The most common MCLs in Alaska are for total coliform or a treatment technique (chlorine under 0.2 mg/l or turbidity over allowed limit). Call the Drinking Water Specialist or check the web to determine your MCL violations.

❽ Every CCR must include definitions of key terms that consumers will need to understand the contaminant data. *You must use the definitions listed here for MCL and MCLG.*

❾ Include these definitions if your report contains information on a detected contaminant that is regulated by an action level or a treatment technique.

❿ If your water system violated the monitoring and reporting of compliance data during the year covered by the report, your CCR must describe the violation.

**Wherever the level found exceeds the action level or the MCL, include health effects language. Call the SDWA Hotline or your drinking water specialist for the correct wording.