

# Northern Flows



Alaska's Drinking Water Program Newsletter  
 Issue 28 • Winter 2006-2007

## Important Information



### For Water System Operators and Owners



## Northern Flows

### DW Program Directory



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### Message from the Manager

The year is over; however, it seems as though it just started yesterday. For the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Drinking Water (DW) Program, so much has been accomplished this year, and we have many projects planned for next year. I hope all Alaska public water system (PWS) owners and operators also feel a great sense of accomplishment for the year and have completed their annual monitoring requirements and their sanitary surveys. If not, now is the time to get it done, so that we can start the New Year in a positive manner.

This year, the ADEC DW Program completed the adoption by reference of the federal Arsenic Rule, Radionuclides Rule, Variances and Exemptions Rule, Filter Backwash and Recycling Rule, Analytical Methods, and the Long Term 1 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule. Other significant changes made to the Drinking Water Regulations include new fees, and fee increases, changes to the Sanitary Survey

Inspector requirements, use of the Electronic Data Reporting System (EDRS) for ADEC certified drinking water laboratories to submit PWS compliance monitoring information directly to the state, and a master meter requirement for water systems. Currently, we are working on finalizing primacy application packages for federal drinking water rules adopted over the past several years, and plan to have full primacy for these rules soon. A new set of drinking water regulations became effective November 9, 2006. Please take this opportunity to become familiar with these regulations. You can obtain a copy from the Drinking Water Program's website at:

Scroll down the page, "click" on Chapter 80, and then select the Adobe Reader File version.

The DW Program continues its active recruitment of new staff. Adrian Nica, joined our program in November 2006 as an Analyst Programmer in the Anchorage office; in December 2006, Leah

Guzman joined the program in the Anchorage office as an Environmental Program Specialist; and in January 2007, we welcomed Jamie Stafford as our new Regulations Specialist. The DW Program is also actively recruiting for four new engineering positions to be located in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Soldotna, and Wasilla offices.

I want to thank all the ADEC DW Program staff, the Alaska PWS owners and operators, and all the other public health professionals in the state for all their efforts and diligence over the past year. Without your coordinated efforts we would not have the public health protection we currently have for our drinking water. Thank you for jobs well done. I hope you enjoyed the holidays, and are looking forward to a prosperous new year.

*James R. Weise*

James Weise  
 Manager  
 Drinking Water Program



<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/index.htm>

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Each year the Drinking Water Program prepares an Annual Compliance Report (ACR) as required by the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. As a primacy state, Alaska submits data electronically every quarter to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) federal PWS database. The data transmitted includes information on Public Water System (PWS) inventory, source, violations, and associated enforcement actions. The ACR is a summary of that data, giving an overview of the number and type of violations that were issued to Alaska's PWS over the past year. A summary of the 2005 ACR is available on the DW Program's website (<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/dw/dwmain/violations.html>). To obtain a complete copy of the report please contact Jeanine Oakland at [jeanine\\_oakland@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:jeanine_oakland@dec.state.ak.us) or (907) 269-2007.

Happy New Year, regs fans! The past couple of months have seen significant happenings in the area of regulations. On the state level, the third set of drinking water regulatory changes for this year went into effect on November 9, 2006. These changes were mostly technical, in order to make our regulations, 18 AAC 80, consistent with federal requirements. This will allow the Drinking Water Program to receive full primacy from the EPA for nine federal drinking water rules, as noted in the last issue of *Northern Flows*. An electronic copy of these current regulations is available on the Regulations page of the Department of Environmental Conservation's website (the web address is noted in this issue under "Message from the Manager" on page 1).

One notable difference in the final version of these Drinking Water regulations compared to earlier versions is that the proposed changes regarding disinfection of a nonsurface water source have been deleted (see 18 AAC 80.035). Another difference is that the "Water System Inventory Form," initially proposed as a requirement before a public water system receives final approval to operate, is no longer referred to by that name. Instead, it is "a summary of information, from the initial construction submittals of plans and information required by this chapter, and from record drawings required in (1) of this subsection." This summary must be "(A) completed and signed by the registered engineer who signed and sealed the record drawings; and (B) submitted on a current form provided, and in a format approved, by the ADEC with the request for final approval to operate" (see 18 AAC 80.210(j)(5)).

The Operator Certification Program also made recent regulatory changes that impact the drinking water community. Changes to the Operator Certification Program became effective on December

3, 2006, through ADEC Division of Water regulations under 18 AAC 74. A summary of these changes includes supervising operator responsibilities; education and experience prerequisites; system classification, and replacing "OIT" certification with "Provisional" certification for operators. The new regulations can be accessed online at: →



(scroll down to Chapter 74, Water and Wastewater Operator Certification and Training).

On the federal level, the EPA published the final Ground Water Rule, October 11, 2006, with an effective date of January 8, 2007. This rule provides for increased protection against microbial pathogens, specifically viral and bacterial pathogens, in public water systems that use ground water sources. This rule builds on existing state programs to identify and focus on those systems that use a ground water source, and that are susceptible to fecal contamination. The EPA says that current regulatory provisions (e.g., sanitary survey requirements in the Total Coliform Rule) for ground water systems do not adequately address fecal contamination at the ground water source, so this new rule is needed to safeguard public health. An electronic copy of the Ground

Water Rule can be accessed through the DEC website's Drinking Water Program page at: →

The ADEC Drinking Water Program plans to adopt the Ground Water Rule at a later date.

A critical deadline for another federal rule, the Radionuclides Rule, is coming onto the radar screen. This rule was previously incorporated into the Alaska Drinking Water regulations effective January 11, 2006. Under this rule, all community water systems (CWS) must complete initial monitoring by December 31, 2007. This initial monitoring consists of four consecutive quarters of monitoring for gross alpha, combined radium-226/228, and uranium. For beta particle and photon radioactivity, no initial monitoring is required for most CWSs, except that vulnerable CWSs must sample for gross beta particles, quarterly; and for tritium and strontium-90, annually. The results of this initial monitoring period will determine future routine monitoring schedules for a system, including increased (quarterly) or reduced (once every 3, 6, or 9 years) monitoring requirements. (See the related article on "Radionuclides Sampling" in this issue of *Northern Flows* on page 3.)

All in all, it has been an eventful year for drinking water regulations, and the New Year is shaping up to be active, too. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Drinking Water regulations development and implementation process. ~

**Question:** Why is reducing turbidity so important and what should your turbidity levels be? (Answer on page 7)

[Http://www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/index.htm](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/index.htm)

[www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/dw/dwmain/epa\\_rules.html](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/dw/dwmain/epa_rules.html)

**Answer:** Turbidity is a condition of the water where there is a presence of suspended matter. One of the primary health-related treatments of drinking water is associated with the removal of turbidity. Turbidity itself is not a health hazard, turbidity just makes water cloudy in appearance and unpleasant in taste. However, it does provide a hiding place for microorganisms, reducing the possibility that they will be killed by a disinfectant such as chlorine. Most conventional water treatment plants should be able to consistently get turbidity in their finished drinking water below 0.1 ntu.

**Dear Doctor Drip:** Christine Rae Lutsch's question is - "What are the requirements to qualify for reduced monitoring for TTHM and/or HAA5? What is the reduced monitoring schedule if one qualifies?"

The Stage 1 Disinfectant/Disinfection By-Products (D/DBP) Rule requires all Community Water Systems that disinfect to collect distribution system samples for total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) and Haloacetic acids (HAA5s). Routine sampling is based on population size and source water type. Subpart H systems serving fewer than 500 persons may not be reduced below the initial sampling requirement of one set of TTHM/HAA5 samples per year, and may actually be required to increase sampling frequency if annual TTHM and HAA5 results exceed one or both MCLs. Larger Subpart H systems may be able to achieve reduced monitoring if the running annual averages (RAAs) of the samples are less than or equal to half the MCLs for both TTHMs and HAA5s and the system has collected raw water total organic carbon (TOC) samples with an RAA result of less than or equal to 4.0 mg/L. The Stage 2 D/DBP Rule further clarified this by requiring the TOC sampling frequency to be monthly in order to qualify for reduced monitoring. Once reduced monitoring is achieved, systems may reduce TOC sampling to quarterly, but must continue to maintain a RAA of less than or equal to 4.0 mg/L. Ground water systems may reduce TTHM and HAA5 monitoring if the RAAs of both analytes are less than or equal to half the MCL and no raw water TOC monitoring is required. The table below displays the requirements for both routine and reduced monitoring as well as the requirements for achieving reduced monitoring for each system type.

System Type	Routine Monitoring		Reduced Monitoring	
	Frequency	Location	Condition	Frequency
Subpart H ≥ 10,000	4/plant/qtr	25% Max Residence Time (RT) 75% Rep.	≤50% of MCLs TOC ≤ 4.0 mg/L	1/plant/qtr at Max RT
Subpart H ≥ 500 - 9,999	1/plant/qtr	Max RT	≤50% of MCLs TOC ≤ 4.0 mg/L	1/plant/year in month of warmest water temp. at Max RT
Subpart H < 500	1 plant/year in month of warmest water temp. **	Max RT	No Reduced Monitoring	**Increased monitoring required if exceed the MCL
Ground Water ≥ 10,000	1/plant/qtr	Max RT	≤50% of MCLs	1/plant/year in month of warmest water temp. at Max RT
Ground Water < 10,000	1/plant/year in month of warmest water temp. **	Max RT	≤50% of MCLs (2 years) or < 25% of MCLs (1 year)	1/plant/3 years in month of warmest water temp. At Max RT

**Subpart H Systems are systems with a surface water source or ground water under the direct influence of surface water source.**

Doctor Drip encourages you to send in any questions to: The Drinking Water Program, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501; or email them to the editor of *Northern Flows*: [kathaleen\\_kastens@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:kathaleen_kastens@dec.state.ak.us), or call in at (907) 269-7639. We look forward to hearing from you.

# TRAINING

**2 EPA Webcasts at ADEC Building, 555 Cordova St., Anchorage, AK 99501  
First Floor Conference Room**

“Stage 2 DBPR & LT2ESWTR Rule: Complete Rule Overview”  
January 16 and 18, 2007 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (AST)

“Implementing Stage 2 DBPR & LT2ESWTR: Compliance & Assistance Tools for Systems”  
January 23 and 25, 2007 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (AST)

Please contact Gloria Collins for more information, or to reserve space:  
Phone (907) 269-3075, or email: gloria\_collins@dec.state.ak.us

For more information on these EPA training webcasts: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/training.html>

## What's Wrong with this Picture? *by Scott Forgue*

### What's Wrong With This Picture?

*by Scott Forgue*

This photograph was taken during a sanitary survey of a public water system. “What's wrong with this picture?”(Answer below)



**ANSWER:** This picture shows a public water system water storage tank vent with sanitary risks.

Atmospheric (non-pressurized) water storage tanks need to be vented to allow air into the tank as the water level goes down, and allow air to be displaced from the tank as the water level increases. While allowing the transfer of air, vents need to prevent the entrance of surface water or rainwater, exclude birds and animals, and should exclude insects and dust, as much as possible while allowing effective venting.

This tank vent has been damaged by snow and ice buildup over the years (notice the nuts that are working their way off). It appears to be damaged enough to allow the harborage of birds, animals or insects, which could lead to contamination of the water in the tank.

Thanks to *LTJG Christopher Dankmeyer, R.E.H.S., Environmental Health Specialist with the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation* for providing this picture.

Send your picture showing something wrong with a drinking water system to Scott Forgue at [Scott\\_Forgue@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:Scott_Forgue@dec.state.ak.us), if you would like to see it in a future issue of *Northern Flows*.

## Radionuclides Sampling *by Jessica Goldberger*

**A**s a new year is upon us, a new compliance deadline for Community Water Systems (CWS) comes into effect. Initial monitoring for the New Radionuclides Rule must be completed by **December 31, 2007**.

### What's the difference between the New Radionuclides Rule and the old rule?

Under the new rule, CWSs of all sizes have separate monitoring requirements for radium-228, radium-226, and gross alpha. Since long-term exposure to radionuclides in drinking water may cause cancer, the new rule sets strict Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) guidelines for combined radium-226/228, gross alpha particle radioactivity, and uranium. The rule sets additional monitoring requirements for gross beta particles and photon activity for vulnerable CWSs. Furthermore, the new rule requires that water samples are collected at the Entry Point to the Distribution System (EPDS) rather than from a representative point within the distribution system such as a drinking water tap in the community. This new provision ensures that water samples accurately represent all customers, since water quality may vary significantly throughout the distribution system.

### What are the initial monitoring requirements for community water systems?

The initial monitoring requirement for the Radionuclides Rule is **four consecutive quarters** of samples for gross alpha, combined radium 226/228, and uranium. There are two compliance options for collecting the radionuclides samples:

- **Composite Sampling**  
Since the cost for a radionuclides test runs in the range of \$650-\$750, this option is recommended for composite sampling. A system collects four consecutive quarterly samples from a single entry point, and has the laboratory composite (combine) them (i.e., The lab holds onto each sample until all samples are collected, then combines and analyzes them as one sample, as long as the analysis is done within one year of the first sample).

\*\*Be sure to contact your lab to make sure it has the capability to do the analysis and have storage space for compositing.

- **Quarterly Samples**  
These samples are analyzed separately. If results of the first two quarterly samples are below the detection limit, the state may waive the final two quarters of initial

monitoring. If the results are above the detection limit, the system will have to have all four quarterly samples analyzed.

This option may be best for water systems that have already collected and analyzed their first quarter sample. (Overall, this option will be more expensive than composite sampling.)

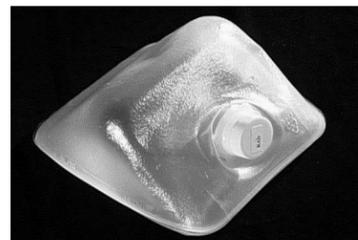
### What will routine monitoring look like?

Based on initial monitoring results for gross alpha, radium 226/228, and uranium; routine monitoring will be determined, and may be reduced to once every 3, 6, or 9 years.

Now is the time to start planning for the New Year and compliance with the new Radionuclides Rule. It is best to take your samples early in the quarter, so if there are any problems, it will be possible to re-sample during that quarter, keeping your water system in compliance. Please work with your local Drinking Water Program compliance staff if you have any further questions.

There are photographs below describing some things to keep in mind when sampling for radionuclides.

**Containers for radionuclides sampling are either a 1-gallon Nalgene plastic bottle or two 2-liter plastic bottles per sample, and must be pre-cleaned.**



**If possible, use a non-swivel faucet and remove all attachments, including any aerators, strainers and hoses prior to collecting the sample.**



**Hold bottle at an angle and carefully fill it to its shoulder.**



**Carefully pack the bottles and return them to the laboratory within 1 week following the sampling event for storage and preservation.**



\*Sampling instructions provided by Analytica  
\*Pictures provided by the EPA

In Appreciation of the Well-Trained Operator *by Susan Bulchow*

Every public administrator or community leader knows the importance of safe drinking water for their community. Whether considering the community's day-to-day priorities, or assessing the community's emergency preparedness, safe drinking water rises to the top of the list. Community leaders also know that a community's public water system (PWS) only achieves its intended value when it is capable of providing safe drinking water. To that end, we need to build our water systems to meet current standards and then *keep them well-maintained, and safely operated by providing our operators with the tools and training they need to do their jobs.*

The value of a well-trained operator cannot be overstated. Recent studies conducted nationally and internationally have revealed that one of the primary contributing factors (second only to correcting structural deficiencies) for ensuring a PWS remains free of bacterial contamination is appropriate operator certification and the necessary ongoing training and education for water system personnel.

Operator certification and training not only minimizes public health concerns, it promotes a sense of public trust and confidence in the drinking water, maximizes the performance of the system, improves the community's compliance with existing regulations, optimizes the system's operation costs, and maximizes the longevity of the equipment. When thought of in that way, the operator is not only a public health professional, but a financial and management professional too.

Here at ADEC, we recognize the important role that a well-trained operator plays in protecting public health and we offer a collective *thank you* to all our operators in this State, as well as to the communities that support them, and provide them with the tools and training necessary to complete their work efficiently and effectively. If we can be of assistance in helping identify the training opportunities for the operators in your community, please feel free to contact us at any of the phone numbers listed in the directory of this newsletter, and if we can't assist you with your training needs, we will try to find someone who can.

**Additional resources available for operator training and/or for assessing what type of operator training may be needed for your system:**

- **On-the-job training from current operators and the operations manual for the individual system.**
- **ADEC Operator Certification Program** Web link: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/opcert/index.htm>  
Phone: (907) 465-5140
- **Small System Online Training**  
Web link: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/opcert/onlinetraining.htm>
- **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**  
Web link: <http://www.anthc.org/>  
Main number: (907) 729-1900
- **Remote Maintenance Workers (list of RMWs and villages served)**  
Web link: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/rmw/pdfs/2006rmwdirectory.pdf>
- **Alaska Training Technical Assistance Center**  
Web link: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/attach/>  
Main number: (907) 747-7756
- **Alaska Water Wastewater Management Association**  
Web link: <http://www.awwma.org/>  
Main number: (907) 561-9777
- **Alaska Rural Water Association**  
Web link: <http://www.arwa.org/>  
Main number: (907) 357-1155
- **Mentoring operators from neighboring communities**
- **Publications from EPA**  
Web link: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/>  
Safe Drinking Water Hotline: (800) 426-4791
- **National Drinking Water Clearinghouse**  
Web link: <http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/ndwc/>

**Did you know?**

All operators of Class A (community and non-community non-transient) PWSs, as well as Class B (transient non-community) systems using a surface water source, are required by state and federal regulations to have appropriate operator certification.

In order to obtain approval to operate a new PWS, or to modify an existing system, the owner must demonstrate that the system has the financial, managerial, AND technical capacity to operate the system in a safe manner (which includes demonstrating that operators are appropriately certified and that the community has budgeted for ongoing training and education of their water system personnel).

For questions regarding these requirements, please contact the ADEC Drinking Water Program or the ADEC Operator Certification Program.

Incident Command System *by Shannon DeWandel*

While most emergency situations are handled locally, when there's a major incident, help may be needed from other jurisdictions, such as the state, and the federal government. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was developed March 2004, so that responders from different disciplines can work together more efficiently to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism. The NIMS is a comprehensive system that will improve response operations through the use of the Incident Command System (ICS), and other standard procedures and preparedness measures.

The overwhelming majority of emergency incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single jurisdiction at the local level. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), requires all federal departments and agencies to adopt and implement the NIMS, and also requires states, territories, tribes and local governments to implement the NIMS to receive federal preparedness funding.

When NIMS is fully implemented, states and local jurisdictions will be able to ensure common and proven incident management practices and principles. This information can be used to plan for, protect against, respond to, and recover from emergency incidents and preplanned events.

In federal Fiscal Year 2005, the Secretary of Homeland Security provided guidance to each state, outlining initial actions that should be taken to implement the NIMS. The minimum FY 2005 NIMS activities that affect the water sector included institutionalizing the use of the Incident Command System (ICS).

**Incident Commander**

**Logistics**

**Planning**

**Operations**

**Finance & Administration**

**What is an Incident Command System?**

ICS is a standardized on-scene incident management concept. It is designed specifically to allow responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any single incident or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

In the early 1970s, ICS was developed to manage rapidly moving wildfires, and to address the following problems:

- too many people reporting to one supervisor;
- different emergency response organizational structures;
- lack of reliable incident information;
- inadequate and incompatible communications;
- lack of structure for coordinated planning among agencies;
- unclear lines of authority;
- Terminology differences among agencies; and
- unclear or unspecified incident objectives.

An ICS enables integrated communication and planning by establishing a manageable span of control. An ICS divides an emergency response into five manageable functions essential for emergency response operations: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance and Administration.

**Do I need to have ICS?**

ICS is not "required" for public water systems; however, this system can be easily used by a PWS. At the PWS level, the Emergency Response (ER) Lead has the role of Incident

Commander, unless the incident is of such significance that local, State, or Federal officials take over the command. You could use ICS to help organize yourself and your ER team, whether the team consists of staff from your PWS, or other emergency responders. First responders may use ICS when responding to a major event. At a minimum, you should be familiar with ICS terms and command structure. First responders may take over the role and responsibilities of Incident Commander in the latter stages of a major event, and you should know how this affects your role and responsibilities.

Water system managers and ER Leads should address roles, responsibilities, and the command structure for dealing with large-scale emergencies.

Initial Minimum Criteria for Public Works Personnel recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is completion of the following courses/curricula:

1. ICS-100: Introduction to ICS
2. ICS-200: Basic ICS
3. FEMA IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction

More information on ICS can be obtained from FEMA at: →

Assistance with these and other emergency response or security issues is available by contacting Shannon Dewandel, PWS Security Specialist, at (907) 269-8924 or by email:

[shannon\\_dewandel@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:shannon_dewandel@dec.state.ak.us)

Also, please go to the DEC DW Program's Security webpage to complete an annual PWS factsheet. ~

http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is195.asp