

Fluoridation of drinking water

WAC 246-290-460



August 2015

Background

On April 27, 2015, the federal Department of Health and Human Services changed the recommended level of fluoride in drinking water for dental health protection. The new guidance establishes a lower level of 0.7 milligrams per liter (mg/L) as the optimal level of fluoride in drinking water throughout the United States.

The Washington State Board of Health (Board) adopts rules regulating Group A public water systems. The Board filed an initial notice to begin rulemaking in May 2011 in anticipation of the lower recommendation. It was refiled in July 2015 to include notification requirements (see below).

Currently, 51 Group A public water systems provide fluoridated water to its customers—over two million people. An additional 66 water systems receive water from fluoridating systems that serve an additional one million people.

The current rule requires water systems that fluoridate to maintain a concentration within a range of 0.8 to 1.3 mg/L, monitor the concentration through sampling, and report analysis results to the Department of Health’s Office of Drinking Water.

Draft rule revisions

This rule revision is necessary to incorporate new federal recommendations for water systems that fluoridate. The changes include the following:

- Add an optimal fluoridation concentration level of 0.7 mg/L and reduce the operating range from 0.8 to 1.3 mg/L, down to 0.6 to 1.0 mg/L.
- Require systems to notify the Office of Drinking Water before they stop fluoridating.
- Clarify daily and monthly monitoring requirements, and the method to calculate monthly concentration averages.
- Clarify corrective actions when a sample or measurement is “out of operating tolerance” or “off measure,” and defines these terms.
- Update the reference to the current “*Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater*” manual (January 2012), for conducting analyses and associated procedures, or other department-approved procedures.

State Board of Health’s Mission

The Board’s mission is to provide statewide leadership in developing and promoting policies that protect and improve the public’s health.

Office of Drinking Water’s Mission

We work with others to protect the health of the people of Washington State by ensuring safe and reliable drinking water.

We want your feedback on the draft changes to the rule

This is your opportunity to review the draft rule and provide comments. You can find a copy of the draft rule and timeline on our rulemaking webpage at www.doh.wa.gov/odwrulemaking

Send your comments to FluoridationRuleComments@doh.wa.gov no later than **August 31, 2015**.

Next Steps

After the informal comment period ends, staff will evaluate comments and make changes to the rule language if necessary, and begin drafting the required analyses.

For more information:

State Board of Health: Contact [David De Long](#), policy analyst, at 360-236-4111.

Office of Drinking Water: Contact [Theresa Phillips](#), rules coordinator, at 360-236-3147.

You can sign up for our [rules email list](#) to get up-to-date information for all drinking water rules.



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