WATER TAP

WASHINGTON'S DRINKING WATER NEWSLETTER

Washington State Department of Health
Division of Environmental Health
Office of Drinking Water

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Flood! Yakima responds to a water outage

The force of water and debris coming down the Yakima River removed the lids and damaged the exposed air release valves.

Every year, as part of their normal operating procedure, employees at the City of Yakima shut down the treatment plant when they detect a spike in turbidity and begin using groundwater wells to meet customer demand.

This year, there was a surprise in store for them. On May 16, as soon as the run-off from snowmelt and rain began to increase the water level and flow of the Naches River, the employees began to observe a rise in raw-water turbidity levels at the Naches River Water Treatment Plant.

With the plant shut down, the employees noticed the wells were having difficulty maintaining water levels in the reservoirs. Noting that the wells were in full operation, and after confirming that the low levels in the reservoirs were real and not the result of a malfunctioning sensor, they activated emergency interties with the Nob Hill Water Association.

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Are you ready for another wet 'n' wild winter?

Weather forecasters say another La Niña weather pattern has set up in the Pacific Ocean, so we might be in for another wet and wild winter. Is your water system ready for flooding, power outages, hard freezes, high winds and other assorted misery?

If not, consider stocking:

- Backup generators for your well pumps and other electrical needs.
- Enough coliform sample bottles to sample each well and the distribution system daily for at least a week.
- Extra chlorine and unscented bleach for emergency water disinfection.
- Flashlights and plenty of batteries.

Communication with your customers is essential. Make sure they have the information they need to make good drinking water decisions.

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Are you prepared for your next sanitary survey?

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The Director's Column

by Denise Addotta Clifford

74 percent let their computer do the talking

Special thanks to everyone who submitted annual water use efficiency reports this year. Seventy-four percent of you filed your reports online and on time!

It's the highest percentage return we've received by the July 1 deadline. That's quite an accomplishment when you consider that the number of water systems required to file the reports more than tripled this year, from about 650 to 2,166.

The increase occurred because a state Supreme Court decision in October 2010 overturned a lower court ruling that had stripped parts of Washington's Municipal Water Law. The lower court ruling exempted some 1,500 water systems from parts of the Municipal Water Law's requirements, including water use efficiency planning.

The Supreme Court ruling means the formerly exempted water systems must once again comply with Municipal Water Law requirements, including filing annual water use efficiency reports.

The back-and-forth court rulings no doubt caused some initial confusion, so I'm doubly gratified that so many of our water systems followed through this year (see page 7). Making efficient use of water not only conserves a valuable resource, it saves money and energy.

Capacity assessment

As state budgets continue to shrink and technology improves, we'll use the Internet more often to serve the drinking water community. A great example is the new online capacity tool, a free self-assessment survey that water systems can use to help determine their technical, managerial, and financial health. When you complete the assessment, you'll get immediate feedback that highlights your strengths and provides tips and resources for improvement.

We designed the assessment tool for Group A community water systems with 100 to 1,000 connections. After December 9, we'll open the assessment to smaller Group A community systems. The assessment is not open to Group A noncommunity and Group B systems.

You'll find a worksheet and a link to the assessment online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Programs/capacity2.htm

Do you have ideas for other ways we can use technology to better serve you? I'd love to hear your ideas.

Please make sure the Water Facilities Inventory coordinator in our regional office has your current e-mail address so you can receive reminders and important announcements from us.

Tough decisions

As I write this, the Legislature is beginning a special session to address funding shortfalls. It would be foolish of me to think the Office of Drinking Water won't be affected.

I've been scouring our budget for places to trim. The last round of reductions greatly reduced our outreach capacity. Without that support, and with additional reductions expected, one expense I can no longer justify is the annual Drinking Water Week awards program. This was a tough decision for me because the awards showcase the great work you do to ensure safe and reliable drinking water.

I hope you'll continue to observe Drinking Water Week and share your successes with your customers and us.

Thanks for all you do to keep our drinking water safe. Best wishes for the holidays and New Year.

Denise A Clifford

Are you prepared for your next sanitary survey?

Did you fix the deficiencies identified in your last sanitary survey report? Do you know when your next sanitary survey is? If not, call your regional office and talk to the sanitary survey program manager.

We want you to be prepared and understand what we expect you to do when a Department of Health staff person, local health jurisdiction, or contract surveyor calls to schedule your survey. Below are a few things the surveyor will want to discuss and review during the survey.

It's important for the people with the most knowledge about the system's operations and management to be available to answer questions during the survey. We understand your time is valuable. By telling you what to expect we hope you'll find the experience worth your time and beneficial to your water system.

Have you reviewed your last sanitary survey?

Are there any deficiencies identified in your last sanitary survey that you need to finish before your next survey? By reviewing the last survey report, you will be able to discuss completed improvements and what you may still have to do.

Who should attend?

Include the people who know the most about the operations and management of the water system. The operator is a key person. Board members and other management personal can add to the discussion on planning, management, and budget-related issues. If the surveyor meets with a person who has little knowledge of the system, the value to the system will be limited and it may be necessary to reschedule the sanitary survey.

What records do you need?

The surveyor will want to review planning and management documents, usually before looking at the facilities. You can use plans and drawings to discuss the layout of the system and give the surveyor a better overall view of things. It is important to point out any changes made to the design or operation of the system. You should also discuss any plans for future improvements. The better we understand your system, the better we can assist you.

Teresa Walker (left) and Bonnie Waybright from our Southwest Regional Office at a sanitary survey. Your sanitary surveyor will look at your water system facilities, operations, and records to identify conditions that may present an existing or potential public health risk.

Surveyors don't do formal plan reviews, but they can provide useful feedback. So, it's a good idea to make key elements of your Water System Plan, Water System Plan Amendment, or Small Water System Management Program available for review and discussion. Include, for example, your:

- Coliform monitoring plan
- Operations and maintenance program
- Emergency response plan
- Cross-connection control program
- Well protection plan

Do I need information about my system operations?

Yes. If your water system provides treatment, be prepared to discuss the purpose of the treatment, how well it works, and how you monitor the treatment plant and determine whether it's effective. Be sure to review and discuss your operational reports and logs. It is important to let the surveyor know if your water system discontinued or installed any treatment without prior approval from us.

Do you have a storage tank?

Storage tanks are an important part of a sanitary survey because they are a potential entry point for contamination and can adversely affect water quality. You need to be able to discuss the inspection and maintenance procedures for storage facilities. When did you last inspect the tanks, hatch, and overflow or drain lines? You should document these activities and

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Attention, BATs! Did you get your renewal notice?

In November, Washington Certification Services sent renewal notices to all backflow assembly testers (BAT) who are eligible to renew their certificates. The renewals go to your home address. If you didn't get yours and you moved recently, you should submit a BAT Information Change Form so your new address is on record. The forms is online at http://wacertservices.org

First Renewal Notice: Pay $42

Washington Certification Services mailed the first renewal notice to your home address on record in mid-November. Your renewal fee of $42 must be postmarked by January 20, 2012, or you will have to pay a late fee.

Final Renewal Notice: Pay $77

If payment is not postmarked by January 20, BATs will have to pay a $35 late fee. Washington Certification Services will send a second and final renewal notice at the end of January. The final renewal fee of $77 must be postmarked by February 29, 2012.

If BATs fail to pay the renewal fee by the final deadline, their certificate will be invalid and they won't be able to renew it! Failure to pay the renewal fee by the final deadline is not eligible for appeal to the Department of Health. To become certified BATs again, they would have to apply for and pass the BAT certification examination.

Yakima flood... *(Continued from Page 1)*

When the wells, in combination with the interties, still could not keep up with demand and replenish their reservoirs, the employees realized they had a problem. There was a large leak somewhere in the water system.

After further investigation, an employee discovered the problem. Where the 48-inch mainline from the treatment plant crosses the Naches River, the mainline was supposed to have a set of air-release valves protected by a cement caisson. However, the employee couldn't see the caisson cover. As it turns out, the heavy force of debris and the volume of water caused by spring flooding had ripped the cover off the caisson and sheared the air release valves off an 8-inch pipe. This left the line flowing freely into the river.

Employees isolated this section of line, and the water levels in the city reservoirs began to climb. Pressure and chlorine readings indicated no pressure loss or excessive chlorine demand. After city personnel confirmed the isolated valves were the problem, they observed normal operating levels. However, they discovered that the broken line cut the drinking water supply for a section of Gleed, a nearby community.

Trucking emergency water supplies

The city hired a local company to supply water to Gleed by tanker trucks. The company supplying the trucks instituted a clean-and-disinfect program. Just before or after each truck delivered its third load of water, they took the truck out of service and cleaned it. The city also began sampling the truckloads for coliform and chlorine residual to ensure no bacterial contamination was introduced as they filled the trucks.

For those in Gleed who had private or domestic wells as an alternate supply, the city took coliform samples and provided UV disinfection for their sources. In all, the city served just a few homes in the Gleed area and only a handful of homes chose to use domestic wells.

Recovery

Since then, the city has been busy addressing the problem and making plans for better service in the future. They:

- Corrected the problem by isolating and removing the valves so they can begin using the line again.
- Got the permit to begin armoring or fortifying the valves to protect them from debris coming down the Naches River when another flood occurs.
- Got permission to cross the bridge in the event of another emergency, using at least a 24-inch line.

City staff also plan to install the necessary components on both sides of the river crossing, so they can install a quick line if necessary.

CDC's Communication Toolbox will prepare you to communicate with customers, partners in an emergency

Have you ever kicked yourself after handling a drinking water emergency because your communication with customers and other stakeholders wasn't all it could have been? Most of us have.

The new Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolbox may be just what you need—and it's free!

The purpose of the Toolbox is to enable water systems to communicate effectively with partners and the public in order to protect public health. It includes:

- Instructions to help you prepare.
- Guidance explaining what to do during an event.
- Templates and tools.
- Recommendations for follow-up actions and assessments.

The Toolbox provides a communication protocol based on research and identified practices. It recognizes differences in scope, scale, and severity of situations that trigger drinking water advisories—a main break, a hurricane, a drop in pressure, or intentional contamination. These differences affect the types of tools, planning, and communication drinking water systems use.

This project was a collaborative effort of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Water Works Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Association of State Drinking Water Administrators, and the National Environmental Health Association.

A technical workgroup of public health and drinking water agencies and drinking water system experts advised and guided the project. The project also engaged a broad cross-section of stakeholders and technical experts, including local government, emergency response, and hazard communication experts. Staff at the Office of Drinking Water consulted on the project.

Small water systems, listen up!

Because smaller water systems often have less capacity to implement advisory protocols than larger ones, the project team designed and tested the Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolbox with you in mind.

In general, small systems should not need outside support from consultants or others to implement the actions described in the Toolbox. However, building an effective network by collaborating with other public sector partners and community organizations ahead of time will help you succeed during an emergency.

Suggestions for small systems:

- Identify and prioritize specific tools or sections to use.
- Incorporate water advisory protocol planning into regular activities, such as sanitary surveys and updating emergency response plans.
- Build water advisory protocols into regular communication, such as customer updates.
- Partner with local public health and neighboring water systems.

Where to get a copy

The Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolkit is on CDC's website at http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/emergency/drinking-water-advisory-communication-toolbox.pdf

Toolbox Flow Chart

Waterworks Operator Renewals

We mailed more than 4,100 renewals in November.

Did you receive yours? If not, be sure to call Larry Granish right away at (800) 525-2536, Ext. 1, or e-mail larry.granish@doh.wa.gov

Your renewal must be postmarked by January 20, 2012, or you will be assessed a $35 late fee. If you fail to renew by February 29, 2012, you will lose your certification. Loss of certification due to failure to renew by the deadline is not appealable.

Don't forget to let us know when you move. You must report your new address in writing. You may do so:

- By e-mail at larry.granish@doh.wa.gov
- Online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/opcert/
- By writing to Larry Granish, Operator Certification Program, Office of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822, Olympia, WA 98504-7822

Contract operators, you have 30 days…

The Department of Health requires contract operators that operate three or more Group A public water systems to submit a copy of a signed operations contract to us within 30 days of the effective date.

The contract must include the seven duties of the operator in responsible charge:

1. Ensure all of the water system's daily operational and maintenance activities are completed according to acceptable public health practices and water industry standards.
2. Perform water quality monitoring, maintain adequate records and take follow-up action, if necessary, to comply with state and federal drinking water regulations.
3. Implement preventive maintenance programs; inspect treatment and other system components for malfunctions; keep adequate records; and make needed repairs.
4. Analyze and review recording-instrument readings and laboratory tests; determine locations and causes of any malfunctions; adjust various treatment processes or other components accordingly; and maintain a record of these.
5. Implement a cross-connection control program.
6. Determine and implement remedial actions in emergencies. This includes following directives DOH issues to address the situation.
7. Be available 24 hours per day (voicemail, cell phone).

Either send your signed operations contract to Denise Lawton, Office of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822, Olympia, WA 98504-7822, or e-mail the contract to denise.lawton@doh.wa.gov

If you have questions, call Denise Lawton at (360) 236-3145 or (800) 525-2536, Ext. 4.

Lifetime Achievement Awards

In October, the state Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) presented the Joe Mitchelen Lifetime Achievement award to Gary Rhoades and Skip Rand. Rhoades has been the executive director of Evergreen Rural Water of Washington since 1999 and has worked in the public administration of the water and wastewater industry for 40 years. He plans to retire this month. Rand has spent the last 13 years as a rural development specialist at the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, where his vast experience and knowledge has been felt in communities in every corner of the state. IACC recognizes individuals and projects that have made a difference in bettering communities in Washington State.

Year 4 of water use efficiency reporting ends on high note

Year 4 of annual water use efficiency (WUE) reporting for municipal water systems brought big changes. It was the first year that all privately owned municipal water suppliers were required to submit an annual WUE report.

There are more than 2,100 municipal water suppliers in the state. We define municipal water suppliers as all publicly or privately owned Group A community water systems with 15 or more residential connections.

Online reporting: The wave of the future

Our online WUE reporting system is a huge success. Water systems have done an exceptional job of navigating the WUE website and submitting their reports. It appears that online reporting is working quite well with our regulated community, and the WUE program was one of the first to move in this direction.

Did you establish a goal for your customers?

Water efficiency among your customers is just as important as fixing leaks. This year, a number of water systems (mostly privately owned) still need to establish an efficiency goal for their customers.

We suggest taking another look at your WUE goal to make sure it has a measurable water savings over time. Next year we will require water systems that have not successfully established a goal consistent with the WUE regulations to do so.

What's a "goal"?

Some of you have expressed confusion about the difference between a goal and a measure. The annual report asks you to identify your WUE goal. Often we see water systems stating that their goal is to educate their customers. Education is not a goal; it is a measure to achieve the goal.

Think of it this way: The WUE goal is the "what" and the measures are the "how." WUE goals must identify what you intend to achieve: "We intend to achieve a 5 percent total reduction in per capita water use by the year 2015." The measures identify how you will reach your goal: "We will use the following three measures to reach our goal: education tips on our monthly billing statement, increase our rates, and offer outdoor water saving kits and low-flow showerheads."

Celebrating success!

WUE reports: More than 1,600 water systems submitted the online WUE report by the July 1 deadline. In fact, more than 74 percent met the deadline, and we expect to achieve up to 90 percent by the end of 2011.

This is an extraordinary achievement, especially considering that this was the first year of reporting for more than 1,500 privately owned water systems. You have demonstrated accountability and responsibility of wise water management, not only to us, but to all water users statewide. Congratulations on your success!

Water loss performance: Water systems are spending a considerable amount of time, money, and staff resources to meet the state's 10 percent water-loss standard. It is very encouraging to see these systems work toward understanding what they need to do to have a successful leakage reduction program. Our state average water loss dropped from 14.2 percent in 2009 to 13.1 percent in 2010!

If your three-year average water loss exceeded 10 percent, you must implement a water-loss control action plan. This three-year average is the compliance point. More than 200 water systems exceeded the 10 percent standard this year. Most were in the 10-19 percent range. If you need to complete a water-loss control action plan, you'll find a sample plan in Appendix T of the WUE Guidebook.

Systems exceeding the 10% standard

Number	Leakage Rate
124	10 to 19%
34	20 to 29%
52	30% or more

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Planning improves water service

Excerpts from Sandra Fallon, National Environmental Services Center at West Virginia University

Why plan?

Because it helps you....

- **Implement practices that save money.** For example, protecting your drinking water sources (streams, lakes, rivers, aquifers) from pollution can save the cost of expensive treatment processes. Using water meters helps calculate how much water customers use so you can collect fees.
- **Develop an equipment repair and replacement schedule and a strategy to cover the costs.** Your water system is like your car or house. Keeping it in good repair helps to ensure safe, cost-efficient, and long-lasting operation. Knowing the condition and expected life of the equipment will help you determine when to fix or replace it. In turn, that helps estimate how much money you'll need and when you'll need it, so you can set aside a little at a time. Planning will also guide your efforts to obtain or raise funds through rate adjustments, loans, grants, and bonds.
- **Anticipate changes that can affect the system.** Knowing the community's future water needs, upcoming regulations, and number and types of customers is key to determining future services, expenses, and income. Considering the effect of climate change, natural disasters, or other unexpected events can guide your efforts to put preventive, emergency response, or long-term adaptation measures in place.
- **Protect public health.** Planning for system protections, operations, improvements, and funding strengthens your ability to protect public health, which is the most important goal.

Know the system's financial condition

It is essential to understand your system's current financial condition and the cost of doing business. You can get that information from three financial documents:

1. **Balance sheet** identifies the system's net worth. It tells how much the system is worth at a given point in time, and indicates whether it's operating with a deficit.
2. **Income statement** shows the results of operations over a period of time. It tells how much revenue the system earned and the expenses it incurred.
3. **Cash flow statement** breaks down all the system's financial transactions and shows how they affect cash flow.

By examining these documents, performing simple calculations, and comparing the numbers from year to year you can tell:

- How the system is progressing and whether revenue or expenses are up or down.
- The system's ability to pay off current liabilities.
- How much the system relies on debt, its ability to pay its debt, and whether long-term debt is increasing or decreasing.
- The system's net operating income or loss and profitability. Does it make more selling water than it spends producing it?
- Whether the system is charging high enough rates to cover the costs of system operations and future infrastructure investments.
- How financial transactions (borrowing money, equipment repairs, investments) affect the amount of cash available to meet obligations or pay operating expenses.
- Whether the system is experiencing growth or decline, collecting money owed, paying vendors on time, and keeping up with cash flow requirements.

Knowing your financial situation will increase credibility when you talk to ratepayers. For some small systems, it can be like pulling teeth to get all the financial information together, but you have to do it. The software and tools available today make it

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easier to organize and access your financial data. You can get help from many places, such as assistance providers, your independent auditor, or even a high school or community college student who can help input data and get the software up and running.

Starting the planning process

A common planning technique for getting a handle on system conditions is a SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). For most purposes, a review of internal conditions (good and bad), and what's going on externally will be sufficient.

System strengths include good relationships with customers, trained operators who will likely remain at the system, solid finances, and up-to-date infrastructure. Conversely, weaknesses include employee turnover, money troubles, or aging facilities.

External conditions—whether threats or opportunities—include potential emergencies, whether your area is growing or losing population, if new regulations are in the offing, if private companies are buying nearby systems, and if there are plans for consolidating or regionalizing systems. You should also consider climate change influences such as drought, severe or changing precipitation, sea-level rise, and the resulting effect on the availability and dependability of your water sources and services.

Small and rural water systems should consider planning at least 5 years and up to 20 years out. While this may sound overwhelming, **all planning comes down to four basic questions:**

1. ***Where are we now?*** The financial and SWOT analyses, if done honestly, provide an accurate picture of the way things are right now. It's also useful to collect data about pollution threats, current customers, current water consumption patterns, and current system capacity.

2. ***Where do we want to be?*** What will the system be like in 5, 10, 20 years? When will you need major upgrades or replacements? Will you add new customers? Which water and energy conservation and efficiency measures will you implement? These questions allow you to state, in concrete terms, where your system will be by the end of the plan's timeline. Many systems find it useful to create mission and vision statements to capture who they are, what they do, and what they seek to achieve.

3. ***How do we get there?*** To achieve the goals you've set, describe how to make them happen. Create a specific action plan for each goal and prioritize the list. Document who will lead each project, when it will be done, and how much it will cost. Take advantage of strengths and opportunities, and minimize weaknesses and threats to the system. Remember to be realistic. Setting too many goals often means doing none of them well.

4. ***How will we measure progress?*** Goals should be measurable. For example, don't say, "We will add new customers." It's simple, but hard to quantify. A better way to say it is, "We'll add 50 new customers in each of the next five years." Chose milestones for the goals and set stages for achieving them, and report your progress to the board and other stakeholders on a regular basis.

Plenty of work, but worth it

Planning takes commitment and leadership, but the effort will be worth it, and you don't have to do it alone. You can get help from your regional engineer or planner.

It is important to take pride in the system and leave it in better shape for future customers and employees. Understanding your system's financial condition and planning ahead can be positive steps in the right direction.

References and resources

Call our regional office:

Eastern Region, Spokane Valley	(509) 329-2100
Northwest Region, Kent	(253) 395-6750
Southwest Region, Tumwater	(360) 236-3030

Look at these and other publications online at https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm

Small Water System Management Program Guide (331-134). CD. October 2011.

Asset management: A handbook for small water systems (816-R-03-016). September 2003. EPA.

Check Up Program for Small Systems (816-K-08-002). CD. April 2008. EPA.

Resource for Board Members. Coming soon from the Rural Community Assistance Partnership at http://www.rcap.org/commpubs

WUE for mobile home parks

Mobile home parks must comply with the Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Rule as long as they serve 15 or more mobile homes. However, they don't have to install service meters for each mobile home. Do you own, operate or manage a mobile home park? Are you having trouble filling out the WUE report? Here are some tips for you:

- Record it and report it! Start recording the amount of water pumped from your well each month. Report it online at the end of the year.
- Don't have a computer? Call us at (360) 236-3154. We will send you a reporting worksheet. Fill out the worksheet and give it to someone else to submit it online, or use the public computer at a library.
- Establish a goal based on your source meter, such as "Reduce annual water pumped by 1 percent by 2015." If the amount pumped is above average, it's time to do a leak detection survey or ask your customers to fix leaks in their homes.
- Worried about not meeting your goal? Weather and occupancy rate will affect your total water pumped and might result in not meeting your goal. Worry less about these uncontrollable factors and focus on things you can control, like taking actions that promote water conservation. These actions tell us that you understand the purpose behind the law, which is most important.

Achieve your goal with simple actions, such as providing faucet aerators.

A transition plan for backflow assembly field test procedures

We are transitioning to the revised backflow prevention assembly field test procedures published in the University of Southern California's ***Tenth Edition* Manual of Cross-Connection Control.** The transition plan affects Department of Health-certified backflow assembly testers (BATs) and public water systems.

We began using the *Tenth Edition* test procedures on the BAT practical exams January 1, 2011. BATs who want to continue testing backflow assemblies in 2013 must pass the practical exam based on the *Tenth Edition* by the end of 2012.

Our transition plan and the schedule for *field implementation* are online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/ccc

If you have questions, e-mail CCCProgram@doh.wa.gov

Schedule for field implementation

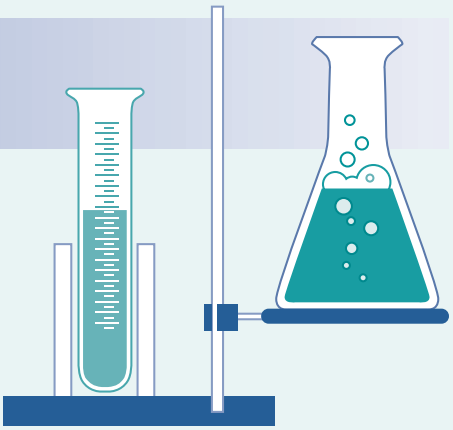
Through December 31, 2012, both the *Ninth Edition* and *Tenth Edition* field test procedures will be in use in Washington State. When providing testing services, BATs must use the:

- Same edition of test procedures in the field as used on their most recently passed practical exam.
- *Tenth Edition* procedures as soon as they pass the practical exam based on the *Tenth Edition*.

January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2012, BATs and water systems must apply the *Tenth Edition pass/fail criteria* to all field tests of reduced pressure backflow assemblies (RPBAs).

Effective January 1, 2013, DOH will accept only *Tenth Edition* test procedures. BATs must have passed the practical exam based on the *Tenth Edition* and use only the *Tenth Edition* procedures in the field. Water systems must only accept assembly tests conducted by BATs who meet these conditions.

LAB CORNER



Lower SRLs prompt revised water sample test panel templates

Because new technologies and methods in the laboratory now more accurately detect analytes at lower levels, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lowered reporting levels.

In response to this mandate, we changed the Water Sample Test Panel Templates you use to report sample results to our Data Entry Center. You can find the templates online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/lab-templates

All certified laboratories must report at least down to the state reporting level (SRL). Some labs have the ability to run tests and give results that are below the posted SRLs. Those labs can still report anything below the SRL as a "non-detect" (ND) to the water system *and* the Office of Drinking Water.

For example, the SRL for arsenic lowered from 0.003 mg/L to 0.0014 mg/L and the SRL for nitrate lowered from 2.0 mg/L to 0.2 mg/L.

A change for water systems

Again, all certified laboratories must report at least down to the SRL. For some water systems, this change will provide new information they can use to start preparing to address water quality issues before they become a risk to their customers' health.

For example, Blue Crystal Inc. previously had consistent non-detects for nitrate. When the laboratory ran nitrate samples from Blue Crystal they consistently tested at around 1.0 mg/L. This was below the SRL of 2.0 mg/L, so the lab reported them as "ND."

Now—even though nothing changed in Blue Crystal's system or well—the lab will report the results as "1.0 mg/L" because it is above the new mandated SRL of 0.2 mg/L. Water systems must report any contaminants detected during required monitoring in their Consumer Confidence Reports, even if they are below the maximum contaminant level.

WUE Program... *(Continued from Page 7)*

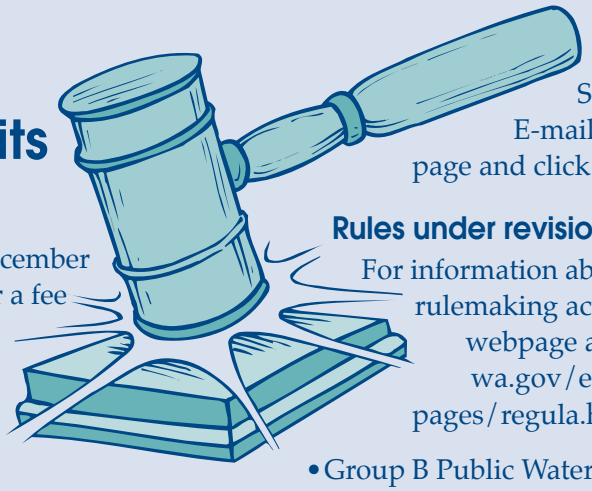
Meter installation progress

About 1,000 water systems in the state—a little less than half of all municipal systems—haven't installed meters. Most of these systems are privately owned, yet, based on their annual reports, they are all committed to getting it done by the January 2017 deadline.

Most plan to install meters well ahead of the deadline, taking advantage of the fact that once meters are installed, they will be able to see what each of their customers is using and credibly account for water loss by managing water system leaks more effectively.

If you have questions about WUE, call Mike Dexel at (360) 236-3154 or e-mail michael.dexel@doh.wa.gov

Drinking water operating permits – fee increase



We will hold a public hearing December 14 on proposed rule language for a fee increase in the Operating Permit Rule, chapter 246-294 WAC. The changes are necessary to comply with Substitute Senate Bill 5364. The new law requires the state Department of Health to set fees in rule and allows us to increase fees.

The proposed revisions include:

- A new fee structure that changes the fee categories and amounts.
- A new base fee of $100 for all Group A public water systems, regardless of the number of connections served.
- Phase in the fee increase over three years to help water systems plan for their budgets and set new water rates as appropriate.
- Eliminating the monitoring waiver fee in the Group A rule, chapter 246-290 WAC to help offset the cost of the fee increase.
- A change in the way we count service connections for the purpose of charging the fee.

Information about the timeline, public hearing, how you can comment on the proposed rule, and supporting documents is online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/regula.htm

Get automatic up-to-date rulemaking information

We use a special e-mail list to send rulemaking notices. To subscribe, go to our home page at http://www.doh. wa.gov/ehp/dw/ Scroll down to "Join our E-mail Lists" at the bottom of the page and click "Drinking Water Rules."

Rules under revision and other information

For information about the following rulemaking activities, visit our Rules webpage at http://www. doh. wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_ main_ pages/regula.htm

- Group B Public Water Supplies, chapter 246- 291 WAC
- Water Works Operator Certification, chapter 246-292 WAC
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program, chapter 246-296 WAC
- Rule publications
- Basic information on the rulemaking process
- Rulemaking moratorium
- Links to the Department of Health and Division of Environmental Health rulemaking websites

Publication update: Group A public water supplies

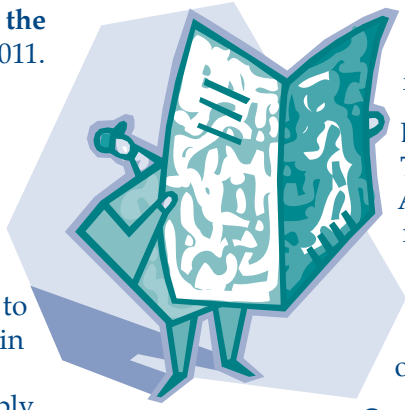
We updated the publication **Group A Public Water Supplies, chapter 246-290 WAC (331-010)** to include the new federal Lead and Copper Rule Short-Term Revisions, effective October 1, 2011.

This publication is available online only. You can download it at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/publications/331-010.pdf

Questions?

For more information, call Theresa Phillips, rules coordinator, at (360) 236-3147 or e-mail theresa.phillips@doh.wa.gov

New & Revised Publications



2011 Water System Capacity Report to the Governor (331-460). New. September 2011. 25-page annual report to the governor summarizes the status of our capacity development program.

Preventive maintenance program: Guide for small public water systems using groundwater (331-351). Revised. November 2011. 52-page planning tool to help small systems achieve and maintain technical, managerial, and financial capacity, and ensure that they can comply with drinking water regulations.

Small Water System Management Program Guide (331-134). Revised. October 2011. This CD provides a structured process to develop and implement a planning tool to prepare your water system for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Group A Public Water Supplies: Chapter 246-290 WAC (331-010). Revised. October 2011. 239-page rule document sets requirements for Group A public water systems.

Coliform Sampling Procedure (331-225). Revised. September 2011. Two pages explain the correct way to collect water samples for coliform laboratory testing. Includes information on containers, timing, sampling points and methods, forms, and procedures.

Long Term 1 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (331-285). Revised. August 2011. Two pages describe monitoring and treatment requirements for water systems serving fewer than 10,000 people that use surface water or groundwater under the direct influence of surface water.

Start-up Procedures for Seasonal Noncommunity Water Systems (331-310). Revised. August 2011. Two pages will help seasonal noncommunity water systems prepare to open.

Shut-down Procedures for Seasonal Noncommunity Water Systems (331-311). Revised. August 2011. Two pages with shut-down procedures to help seasonal noncommunity water systems prepare to close.

For copies of our publications, call (800) 521-0323 or visit us online at https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/ publications/publications.cfm

Get e-mail copies of new and revised publications. Sign up at http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=wa-drinkingwaterpub&A=1

Water labs close; it's a sign of the times

If you live in Walla Walla County, it's probably not news to you that the county and city water labs are closed. Sadly, it is a sign of the times that water systems throughout the state should be aware of.

As local and state governments struggle to balance budgets in response to shrinking revenue, they are cutting or eliminating programs.

Water system managers, board members, and operators should keep an ear to the ground so they're not surprised by closures or service reductions that could affect their operations.

Economic projections indicate the toll on state and local budgets will get worse before the situation improves.

In Walla Walla County, a new private lab called Walla Walla Regional Laboratory is starting up to handle coliform bacteria and nitrate analyses. The county health department will continue to work closely with individual well owners, public water system operators, and us on water system issues.

A complete list of certified labs in the region is online at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/search.html

Operators and backflow assembly testers

2012 is the end of a professional growth period

Here's a simple New Year's resolution for you: Check your professional growth status and reporting period dates on the Washington Certification Services webpage. Then make a plan to meet your requirement if you haven't already.

Even if you don't make New Year's resolutions, remember that all waterworks operators and backflow assembly testers (BATs) must meet a professional growth requirement by their deadline date before they can renew their certificates for the following year. So, don't wait. Classes and exams always fill quickly as a deadline approaches.

Your professional growth deadline depends on the date you were certified

If your original certification date is:	You must meet the professional growth requirement between:
Before 1/1/2007	1/1/2010 and 12/31/2012 and in each 3-year reporting period thereafter.
Between 1/1/2007 and 12/31/2009	Your original certification date and 12/31/2012 and in each 3-year reporting period thereafter.
Between 1/1/2010 and 12/31/2012	Your original certification date and 12/31/2015 and in each 3-year reporting period thereafter.

Online professional growth information

Washington Certification Services has a wealth of information about the professional growth requirement for waterworks operators and BATs online at http://www.wacertservices.org

Waterworks operators can:

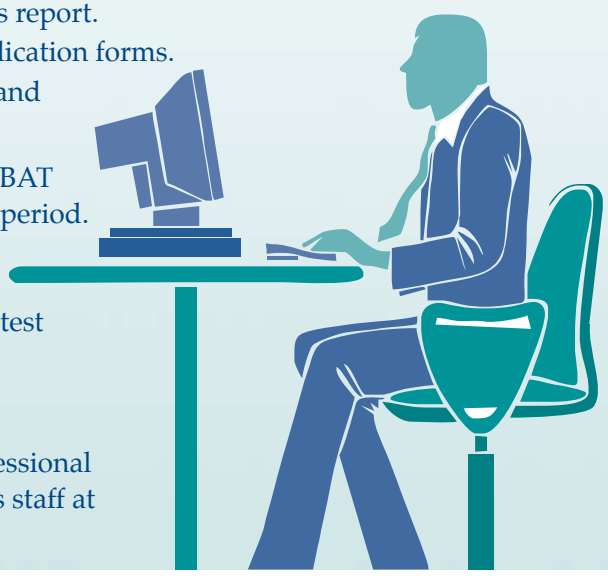
- Review options for meeting the requirement.
- Check their professional growth transcript and status.
- View and search a list of approved training courses in Washington.

Backflow assembly testers can:

- Check their certification and professional growth status report.
- Access the most current exam schedules and print application forms.
- Review information on exam criteria, test procedures, and references.

Apply early and beat the rush! You can apply to take your BAT professional growth exam any time during your reporting period. We expect examinations to fill more quickly than usual because the Department of Health is implementing University of Southern California's new *Tenth Edition* field test procedures (See page 10).

Check your professional growth status online.



Questions?

If you have questions about your waterworks or BAT professional growth requirement, call Washington Certification Services staff at (253) 288-3357 or toll-free (877) 780-2444.

Sanitary survey... *(Continued from Page 3)*

make the records available for review. Photographs should be part of those records.

You will need to know where the overflows and drains are so the surveyor can verify proper screening and check for damage from debris. The surveyor also will need to verify that the storage tank hatch is properly sealed and secure.

Sometimes, safety regulations prevent surveyors from climbing the storage tanks. If so, they will ask to look at the documentation of your most recent inspections.

Will the Groundwater Rule affect sanitary surveys?

Yes. Surveyors now must identify significant deficiencies and give the water system a deadline for correcting them. The rule changes the frequency of routine sanitary surveys for community systems from every five years to every three years. It also requires operators to collect source coliform samples if their water systems get unsatisfactory routine total coliform sample results. You must have a raw water source sample tap to do this, so if you don't have one, install one now.

For more information

There are several publications to help you with these issues online at https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm

- **Groundwater Rule (331-447):** Defines affected water systems and discusses source water monitoring, compliance monitoring, sanitary surveys, corrective actions, public notification, and resources.
- **Groundwater Rule: Source Water Sample Taps (331-436):** Explains how water systems can meet new monitoring requirements by properly installing sample taps as close to each groundwater source as possible and before any treatment facilities, pressure tanks, or storage tanks.

Visit us online at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/public.htm

Call our regional office:

Eastern Region, Spokane Valley	(509) 329-2100
Northwest Region, Kent	(253) 395-6778
Southwest Region, Tumwater	(360) 236-3030

Wild winter... *(Continued from Page 1)*

Got coliform? Give us a call

Contact the Office of Drinking Water regional office nearest you any time you advise customers to boil their water, or your water test results show coliform bacteria is present.

Eastern Region, Spokane Valley:	(509) 329-2100
Northwest Region, Kent:	(253) 395-6750
Southwest Region, Tumwater:	(360) 236-3030
After hours and weekends:	(877) 481-4901

Another source of help is your county's local health or emergency management agency. Contact information is online at http://access.wa.gov/emergency/index.aspx

If a natural disaster damages your system's infrastructure, you may be eligible to file for disaster relief funds. Be sure to keep records of expenses and staff time, so you can apply for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other agencies.

You can find publications to help you through a variety of emergencies at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Publications/331-400-pack.htm

Department of Health
Office of Drinking Water
PO Box 47822
Olympia, WA 98504-7822
(800) 521-0323

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To Do List!

- ✔ *Check your Water Quality Monitoring Report. Did you take all required samples?*
- ✔ *Take the online capacity assessment - Page 2*
- ✔ *Renew your backflow assembly tester certificate - Page 4*
- ✔ *Renew your waterworks operator certificate - Page 6*
- ✔ *Review your professional growth requirements - Page 14*

Visit the Office of Drinking Water online at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/>

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CANCELLED

2012 Drinking Water Week awards cancelled

We are cancelling the Drinking Water Week awards for 2012 because of budget cuts.

The Office of Drinking Water has sustained a number of budget reductions and now faces a new round of cuts and potential staff layoffs.

"As much as this program means to me, I can't justify spending money on trophies and travel when people's jobs are on the line," said Denise Clifford, director of the Office of Drinking Water. "I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of our state's drinking water heroes over the years, and I hope we can restart this program some day."

Drinking Water Week is celebrated nationally the first week of May each year. The observance was created to raise public awareness and understanding of what it takes to provide safe, reliable drinking water. For more information, visit the website at http://www.awwa.org

Contributors

The following people contributed to this issue of **Water Tap**:

Peggy Barton, Brian Boye, Andy Cervantes, Denise Clifford, Carolyn Cox, Terry Dale, Mike Dexel, Larry Granish, Karen Klocke, Denise Lawton, Denise Miles, Terri Notestine, Dick Pedlar, Theresa Phillips, Linda Waring

The Department of Health Office of Drinking Water publishes **Water Tap** quarterly to provide information to water system owners, waterworks operators and others interested in drinking water.

Mary Selecky, Secretary of Health

Maryanne Guichard, Assistant Secretary of Health, Environmental Health Division

Denise A. Clifford, Director
Office of Drinking Water

Comments, questions, story ideas, articles and photographs submitted for publication are welcome. Please address correspondence to Linda Waring, Water Tap, Office of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822, Olympia, WA 98504-7822, or e-mail linda.waring@doh.wa.gov.

Past issues are available by contacting the editor or visiting the website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/watertap.htm>