

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

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Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Tap Water Testing	129**	9
Local Drinking Water Quality	124	8
Household Wells	84	6
Other EPA	72	5
Lead	70	5
Non-EPA Environmental	66	4
Coliforms	65	4
MCL List	63	4
CCR	60	4
Public Notification	45	3

*A total of 1,488 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in November 2003.

**Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 20 percent of the tap water testing questions.

Calls	E-mails	Total***
913	254	1,167

***A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or (877) EPAWATER

For More Information Contact:
Harriet Hubbard, EPA Project Officer
(202) 564-4621

Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton
Under Contract #GS-10F-0090J

What's New

Calendar:

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	More Information
EPA	Stage 1 DBPR Train The Trainer Session	Phoenix, AZ	11/6/2003 – 11/7/2003	To register, contact the SDW Hotline
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group	Washington, DC	11/13/2003 – 11/14/2003	
NDWAC	Public Meeting	Cincinnati, OH	11/19/2003	
SAB	Face to Face Meeting with OW and ORD	Washington, DC	12/10/2003	For more information: www.epa.gov/sab
GWPC	UIC Conference	Houston, TX	1/20/2004 – 1/22/2004	
ASDWA	Member Meeting	Alexandria, VA	3/17/2004 – 3/19/2004	
GWPC	Annual Policy Conference	Washington, DC	3/21/2004 – 3/23/2004	

Did You Know?

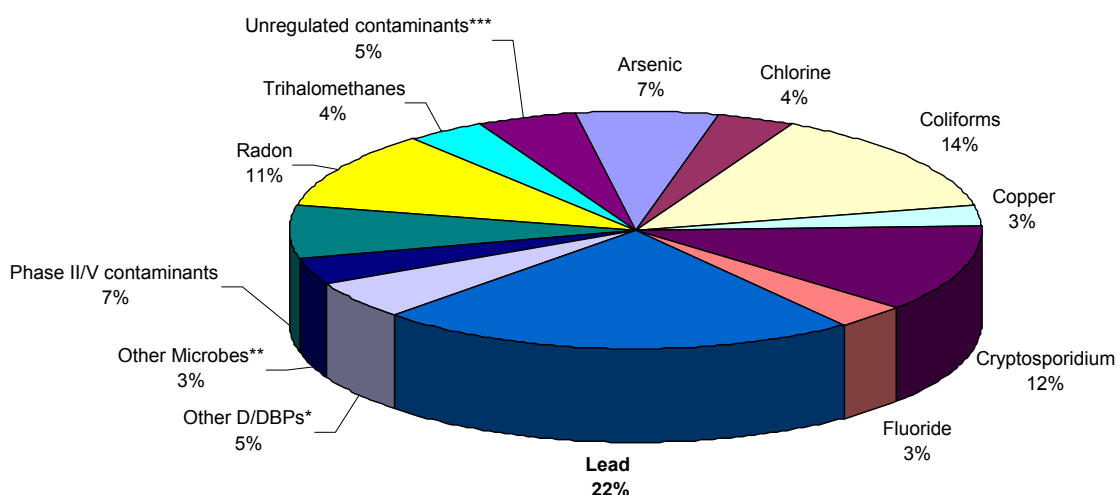
In a national survey commissioned by EPA conducted in 2002, 37 percent of Americans reported using a drinking water filtering or treatment device.

(Analysis and Findings of The Gallup Organization's Drinking Water Customer Satisfaction Survey, EPA816-K-03-005, August 6, 2003)

Monthly Trends

During fiscal year 2003, the largest percentage of questions received by the Hotline, when grouped by specific contaminant or contaminant group, was related to lead. Lead related questions comprised 22 percent of the total question volume (see chart below). The high percentage of lead related questions may be due to several factors including lead disclosure laws when purchasing a new home or moving into a new apartment building, consumer confidence report requirements for lead contamination source information, or children's lead exposure and health information distributed through programs like Head Start. In addition, many callers ask for information on lead contamination sources after learning a child's blood lead level is high. To better address our callers' most frequent questions about this contaminant, the Safe Drinking Water Hotline has compiled a special series of Questions and Answers about lead.

Questions About Specific Contaminants or Contaminant Groups During Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2003



* Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts other than chlorine and trihalomethanes
 ** Microbes other than Cryptosporidium and Coliform bacteria
 *** Includes methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), perchlorate, sodium, and sulfate

Q: How can I get my child's blood lead level tested?

A: A family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide information about the health effects of lead. The state or city/county departments of health can also provide information about how you can have your child's blood tested for lead (*Lead in Drinking Water Regulation: Public Education Guidance*, EPA816-R-02-020, June 2002).

Q: Is there a safe level of lead in drinking water for children?

A: Lead is a toxic metal that can be harmful to human health even at low exposure levels because it is persistent and can bioaccumulate in the body over time (56 FR 26460, 26468; June 7, 1991). Young children, infants, and fetuses are particularly vulnerable to lead because the physical and behavioral effects of lead occur at lower exposure levels in children than in adults. A

dose of lead that would have little effect on an adult can have a significant effect on a child. In children, low levels of exposure have been linked to damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells (40 CFR 141.85(a)(1)(ii)). Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA has set an MCLG for lead at zero, indicating that there is no safe level of lead for children (56 FR 26460, 26469; June 7, 1991).

Q: How can I tell if my drinking water contains too much lead?

A: To determine if your water has lead, you should have your water tested. Testing costs range between \$20 and \$100. Since you cannot see, taste, or smell lead dissolved in water, testing is the only sure way of telling whether or not there are harmful quantities of lead in your drinking water (*Actions You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water*, EPA810-F-93-001, June 1993). To

located a certified laboratory for lead testing contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or visit www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/labs.html. Additional information about actions you can take to reduce lead in drinking water is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/lead1.html.

Q: How can lead get into my drinking water?

A: Typically, lead enters your water after the water leaves your local treatment plant or your well. That is, the source of lead in your home's water is most likely coming from a pipe or solder in your home's own plumbing. The most common cause is corrosion, a reaction between the water and the lead pipes or solder. Dissolved oxygen, low pH (acidity) and low mineral content in water are common causes of corrosion (*Actions You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water*, EPA810-F-93-001, June 1993). Additional information about actions you can take to reduce lead in drinking water is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/lead1.html.

Q: Does the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulate the amount of lead in pipes, plumbing, fixtures, and faucets?

A: The SDWA requires that after June 19, 1986 only lead free pipe, solder, or flux may be used in the installation or repair of a public water system, or any plumbing in residential or non-residential facility providing water for human consumption, which is connected to a public water system. Lead free under the SDWA means that solders and flux may not contain more than 0.2 percent lead, and pipe, pipe fittings, and well pumps may not contain more than 8.0 percent lead (40 CFR 141.43).

By amending Section 1417 of the SDWA in 1996, Congress incorporated a performance standard into the law for endpoint devices intended to dispense water for human consumption. Section 1417 (e) of the SDWA states that "lead free" with regard to plumbing fittings and fixtures intended to dispense water for human consumption means those fittings and fixtures that are in

compliance with a voluntary standard established pursuant to the Act. This standard, NSF Standard 61, Section 9, relates to the amount of lead leached from a product while "lead free" relates to lead content.

Q: I have brand new home. Should I be worried about lead contamination from the plumbing?

A: More likely than not, water in buildings less than five years old have high levels of lead contamination even though lead plumbing use ended in the early 1900's. Lead solder use is still widespread and experts regard solder as the major cause of contamination of household water in U.S. homes today. Lead levels often decrease in new homes over time as mineral deposits form a coating on the inside of the pipes. This coating acts as insulation preventing direct contact between the water and solder, thus decreasing the amount of lead that leaches into the water (*Actions You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water*, EPA810-F-93-001, June 1993). Additional information about actions you can take to reduce lead in drinking water is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/lead1.html.

Q: I am concerned about lead in my drinking water. What precautions can I take to reduce the amount of lead in my drinking water?

A: EPA recommends that anytime the water in a particular faucet has not been used for six hours or longer, you should flush your cold-water pipes by running the water until it becomes as cold as it will get. (This could take as little as five to thirty seconds if there has been recent heavy water use such as showering or toilet flushing. Otherwise, it could take two minutes or longer.) EPA also recommends using only water from the cold-water tap for drinking, cooking, and especially for making baby formula (*Actions You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water*, EPA810-F-93-001, June 1993). Additional information about actions you can take to reduce lead in drinking water is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/lead1.html.

EPA DISCLAIMER

Answers to questions in the Safe Drinking Water Hotline monthly report are intended to be purely informational and are based on SDWA provisions, EPA regulations, guidance, and established policy effective at the time of publication. The answers given reflect EPA staff's best judgment at the time and do not represent a final or official EPA interpretation. This report does not substitute for the applicable provisions of statutes and regulations, guidance, etc., nor is it a regulation itself. Thus, it does not impose legally-binding requirements on EPA, States, or the regulated community. An answer to a question in this report may be revised at any time to reflect EPA's revisions to existing regulations, changes in EPA's approach to interpreting its regulations or statutory authority, or for other reasons. EPA may provide a different answer to a question in this report in the future.

Also, an answer provided in this report may not apply to a particular situation based upon the circumstances. Any decisions regarding a particular case will be made based on the applicable statutes and regulations. Therefore, interested parties are free to raise questions and objections about the appropriateness of the application of an answer in this report to a particular situation, and EPA will consider whether or not the recommendations or interpretations in the answer are accurate and appropriate in that situation. The information in this report is not intended, nor can it be relied upon, to create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States.

Frequently Asked Qs & As

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.

Q: A public water system (PWS) serving fewer than 10,000 persons purchases all its water from a wholesaler and adds a small amount of chlorine to maintain disinfection in the distribution system. Does this PWS need to comply with the Stage 1 Disinfectant and Disinfection Byproducts rule (Stage 1 D/DBP)?

A: The Stage 1 D/DBP rule applies to all community water systems (CWSs) and nontransient, noncommunity water systems (NTNCWSs) that add a chemical disinfectant to the water during any part of the treatment process. The PWS must begin compliance with the Stage 1 D/DBP rule on January 1, 2004 (40 CFR 141.130(a)(1) and (b)(1)).

Q: What is a watershed?

A: Each of us lives in a watershed. A watershed is the total land area and water bodies that drain into a single river or lake system, and/or is the source of groundwater recharge to that river or lake system (*Safe Drinking Water Act - Protecting America's Public Health*, poster, EPA816-H-02-003, January 2002). Watersheds are important because they determine the source of your drinking water. Order free information about watersheds from EPA's website: www.epa.gov/safewater/publicoutreach/posters_vids.

Q: The maximum contaminant level (MCL) for asbestos (fibers greater than 10 micrometers in length) is 7 million fibers per liter (MFL). What are common sources of asbestos in drinking water?

A: Asbestos in drinking water may be from the erosion of naturally occurring mineral deposits or from the decay of asbestos cement water mains. Asbestos fibers are resistant to heat and most chemicals and have been included in a variety of products including cement pipes. Additional information about asbestos in drinking water is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/dw_contamfs/asbestos.html.

Q: We are under a boil water advisory because there is fecal coliform in our drinking water. After the boil order is lifted, will the water in our hot water heater be contaminated?

A: According to Dr. Paul Berger, OGWDW, if the water temperature is maintained at 120°F or lower, there is the possibility that a pathogen may survive. A water temperature of 140°F or greater maintained for a half hour should kill virtually any pathogens in the water heater.

Q: How do we post our water quality report online?

A: Community water systems can provide a link for public access to their water quality report by adding an entry at EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) Web site. To add a new entry, access the following URL: www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm. Select the state in which the water system is located and then select the link to "your water quality report." Once you are on the annual drinking water quality reports page for your state, click on the "add new entry" icon and enter the requested information so that EPA can link to your report from the OGWDW Web site.

Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	913
Total number of e-mails received	254
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:28
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	87.7%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of times callers were transferred to the WSC Wellcare Hotline	294
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about CCRs	176
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local drinking water quality for PWS customers	214
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing and quality for household well owners	179
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing for PWS customers	211

Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
November 2003	913	254
November 2002	1,455	228

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. EPA Internet	194	18
2. Local Water System	122	11
3. State PWSS	119	11
4. State Lab Certification	116	11
5. AGWT/WSC	66	6
6. NSF/WQA/UL	66	6
7. Other Hotlines	49	4
8. Other	46	4
9. Local Public Health	45	4
10. EPA Regions	43	4

*A total of 1,101 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in November 2003.

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	14	3
Citizen - Private Well	89	33
Citizen - PWS	454	91
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	55	11
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	79	28
Environmental Groups	1	5
EPA	7	5
Other Federal Agency	8	4
Government, Local	9	6
Government, State	39	7
Government, Tribal	6	0
Spanish Speaking	2	0
International	4	20
Media	2	1
Medical Professional	2	0
Public Water System	69	11
Schools/University	41	29
Other	32	0
TOTALS	913	254

Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
3-November	41	00:24
4-November	47	00:52
5-November	42	00:28
6-November	50	00:25
7-November	49	00:15
10-November	50	00:25
12-November	66	00:37
13-November	57	00:41
14-November	48	00:20
17-November	55	01:02
18-November	65	00:41
19-November	52	00:22
20-November	49	00:13
21-November	45	00:22
24-November	51	00:17
25-November	69	00:16
26-November	55	00:09
28-November	22	00:21
TOTALS	913	00:28

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	11	5
Coliforms	60	5
Cryptosporidium	7	1
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	21	4
Disinfection – Home Water	3	2
Other Microbials	7	1
Storage – Home Water	2	1
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	23	7
Trihalomethane (THM)	9	0
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	21	5
Fluoride	8	1
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	6	1
Perchlorate	1	0
Phase I, II & V	24	7
Sodium Monitoring	2	2
Sulfate	0	0
Lead and Copper		
Copper	6	1
Lead	63	7
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	3	1
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	19	5
Radionuclides (Radon)	25	4
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	24	6
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	14	6
MCL List	54	9
Other Background	24	12
SDWA	34	2

Category	Calls	E-mails
Water on Tap	20	9
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	15	11
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	4	1
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	53	7
DW Primacy (PWS)	0	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	4	3
Other Drinking Water Security	25	11
Public Notification (PWS)	43	2
Security Planning Grants	1	0
State Revolving Fund (DW)	4	3
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	11	1
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	4	3
Bottled Water	24	10
Complaints about PWS	24	10
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	7	13
Home Water Treatment Units	33	9
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	3	3
Local DW Quality	96	28
Tap Water Testing	109	20
Treatment/BATs (DW)	10	7
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	2	3
Sole Source Aquifer	0	0
Source Water/Wellhead Protection	9	14
UIC Program	4	3
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	60	24
Non-Environmental	18	6
Non-EPA Environmental	37	29
Other EPA (Programs)	44	28
TOTALS	1,135	353

SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

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APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

NOTICES

**“Notice of Request for Initial Proposals (IP) for Projects To Be Funded From the Public Water Supply Supervision Program (CFDA66.424 – Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations and Special Purpose Grants – Section 1442 of the Safe Drinking Water Act)”
November 13, 2003 (68 FR 6431)**

EPA Region 6 is soliciting proposals for federal assistance for Native American water system operation and management training, and technical assistance projects. Proposals are being solicited from tribes, universities, non-profits and other entities defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act interested in applying for this federal assistance. These projects are used to develop, expand, or implement programs designed to provide hands-on technical assistance in the operational and managerial aspects of managing drinking water facilities. EPA will consider all proposals received on or before 12 p.m. midnight Central Standard Time December 29, 2003.

**“Underground Injection Control Program: Hazardous Waste Injection Restrictions; Petition for Exemption--Class I Hazardous Waste Injection, Rubicon, Inc.”
November 21, 2003 (68 FR 65713)**

EPA provided notice that an exemption to the land disposal restrictions under the 1984 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act has been granted to Rubicon, Inc., for five Class I injection wells located in Geismar, Louisiana. As required by 40 CFR part 148, the company has adequately demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Environmental Protection Agency by petition and supporting documentation that, to a reasonable degree of certainty, there will be no migration of hazardous constituents from the injection zone for as long as the waste remains hazardous. This decision constitutes final Agency action and there is no administrative appeal.

**“Science Advisory Board Staff Office: Notification of Multiple Upcoming Meetings”
November 25, 2003 (68 FR 66095)**

EPA’s Science Advisory Board (SAB) Staff Office announced that the SAB Drinking Water Committee will be meeting with the Office of Water and the Office of Research and Development, on December 10, 2002 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**“Public Water Supervision Program Revision for the State of West Virginia”
November 26, 2003 (68 FR 66433)**

EPA announced that the State of West Virginia has revised its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. West Virginia has adopted a Filter Backwash Recycling Rule to require water systems to institute changes to return recycle flows of a plant’s treatment process that may compromise pathogen treatment. EPA has determined that these revisions are not less stringent than the corresponding Federal regulations. Therefore, EPA has decided to tentatively approve

these program revisions. Comments or requests for a public hearing must be submitted by December 26, 2003.