

# Service Connection

The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

*"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water"*

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## Preventing Fuel Oil Spills: Is Your Water System at Risk?

*Jennifer Grant, Compliance Officer*

Every year, the Drinking Water Program is notified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of home heating oil spills near public water systems. These spills can occur as a result of failing or leaking home heating oil tanks, or from the over-filling of tanks, allowing oil to spill out onto the area surrounding the tank.



This scenario becomes particularly troublesome when the spill goes undetected for a period of time, allowing the oil to seep into the ground and potentially into the groundwater supplying their home and their neighbors' homes. Remediation is costly and contamination to your groundwater could affect your water quality for many years. Treatment to remove regulated contaminants from your drinking water is expensive to install and maintain.

In 2009, the Maine Legislature passed a law requiring that any new or replacement home heating oil tanks located within the wellhead protection zone (1,000 feet) of a community public water supply be double-walled or have secondary containment. Please visit the following link for more information on this requirement: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/abovetankstanks/documents/DoubleWallHomeHeatingOilFactSheetJan2010.pdf>.

In 1998, Maine DEP also started a program to assist well owners (including both public water system owners and private well owners) in purchasing new home heating oil tanks. If you or one of your neighbors would like more information or assistance in this program, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/abovetankstanks/replacement.html>.

Contamination of your public water supply from home heating oil is a

### Inside this Issue:

- Director's Corner 2
- Source Protection Funding 3
- Unaccounted-for-Water 3
- 2015 DWSRF Update 4
- Enforcement Corner 4
- Raw Water Taps 5
- Source Protection 5
- Water Operator News 6
- Treatment Review & Approval 6
- RTCR 7

### How to Avoid Receiving a Failure to Monitor/Report Violation

Each year, public water systems are provided with their sampling requirements, which include parameters they must sample for, as well as how often the sampling must be completed. The results of these required water samples (also called "compliance samples") must be reported to the Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) by the tenth day of the month following the month in which the samples were analyzed. In addition, all compliance water sample results must come directly from the certified laboratory.

**Effective immediately:** If a laboratory submits water test results after the 10th of the month, the DWP will consider the "Failure to Monitor/Report" violation resolved and the public notification requirement will be rescinded. The "Failure to Monitor/Report" violation will not be rescinded.

#### To prevent your water system from receiving a Failure to Monitor /Report Violation:

- ✓ Work with your certified lab and make sure the lab knows that your samples are "For Compliance" and need to be submitted to the DWP.
- ✓ Sample as early as possible, to give your lab plenty of time to analyze and submit your sample results. Avoid waiting until the last few days of a quarter to submit samples, in case there are issues with mail delivery, broken bottles or lab analysis.
- ✓ If you have submitted a sample for analysis and you do not see a lab report, call your lab to see if there is an issue. Please work with your laboratory to ensure results are received as required.



Maine Center for Disease  
Control and Prevention

An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

*Continued on page 3*

## Service Connection

# DIRECTOR'S Corner



### 40 Years of the Safe Drinking Water Act

On December 16, 1974, President Gerald Ford signed into law the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). For the first time in our country, a set of national, enforceable drinking water standards was established to reduce the risk of disease caused by contaminated drinking water. Currently, there are approximately 155,000 public water systems in the United States serving more than 290 million people. In Maine, the Drinking Water Program regulates approximately 1,900 public water systems. Half of the residents in Maine receive drinking water in their homes from a public water system.

We've witnessed great accomplishments in improving public water system infrastructure (sources, treatment, distribution, etc.) and overall water quality. Because of advances in science, technology and regulations, we know more about the risks associated with contaminants in drinking water, as well as how to reduce those risks.

As with most broad public policies, the goal of the SDWA is to provide an overall public benefit, balanced by the costs of achieving that benefit. The SDWA has proven very beneficial in reducing public health risk. However, it is not meant to solve all water problems or eliminate risk completely. Congress determined that facilities that serve 25 or more people for 60 days or more per year would be affected by the SDWA. Therefore, systems that serve fewer than 25 people or are open for fewer than 60 days are not affected by this federal legislation. The SDWA regulates approximately 90 contaminants. With many other contaminants that could affect public health, the regulation of these contaminants was determined to be the most beneficial to public health protection from a national perspective.

Of course, the SDWA only sets minimum water quality standards, based upon the goals set by Congress and the US Environmental Protection Agency. Communities, businesses, and individuals that want to provide an additional risk reduction beyond this minimum standard are free to do so. If an entity or person determines that higher water quality is important, and they are willing to pay the cost of achieving that higher water quality, then there are methods to achieve such increased risk reduction. Homeowners served by a public water system may also take measures to reduce risk by using an alternative source of water or by providing additional treatment within their own homes. The homeowner then needs to balance the cost of this risk reduction measure with the expected benefits.

After 40 years of SDWA, the United States enjoys some of the highest quality water in the world. The implementation of the SDWA has effectively reduced the risk of waterborne diseases. Currently, 98 percent of Maine residents served by community water systems receive water that meets all health-based standards of the SDWA. Congratulations on the first 40 years of the SDWA. May the next 40 years continue to show an increase in public health protection for reliably safe drinking water.

Yours for safe drinking water,

*Roger*

## Service Connection

The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

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*'Fuel Spills' continued from cover story...*

serious threat, but one that can help be prevented with the following proactive steps:

1) Install or replace any existing single wall tanks within your wellhead protection area with a double walled tanks or ones with secondary containment to trap any leaked oil. 2) Be aware of the area surrounding any tanks on your site and inspect the tank(s) and surrounding area regularly to identify any spills or leaks (and ask your neighbors to do the same). 3) If you notice a leak, contact the Maine DEP (1-800-482-0777) and the Drinking Water Program (207-287-2070) immediately; early detection is key in preventing contamination of your water supply.



### Funding Available to Protect Your Source

*Erika Bonenfant, Education & Outreach Coordinator*

Do you have a project in mind to help protect the source at your water system? Maybe you've decided its time to update, or perhaps develop, your wellhead protection or watershed protection plan? How about replacing some above ground home heating oil tanks within your source protection area? Or maybe its a good time to seek a source protection ordinance with the town or even purchase some land that has come up for sale within your source protection area? If you answered yes to any of these questions, I have some good news for you: the Drinking Water Program has funding available for all of these types of projects plus many more aimed at source protection!

Wellhead Protection Grants and Source Water Protection

Grants are available to community and non-profit, non-community water systems for projects aimed at protecting their source from contamination. Grant amounts range from \$5,000-\$10,000 and are awarded on an annual basis. Applications for the 2015 Grants will be available by the end of January and will be due by March 31st.

Land Acquisition Loans are low interest loans available to community or non-profit, non-community public water systems for purchase or legal control of drinking water source protection areas, such as conservation easements. There is no deadline to apply for Land Acquisition Loans, so you can apply whenever there is an opportunity to purchase land or a conservation easement within your source protection area.

For more information, visit the Financial Resources section of the Maine Drinking Water Program website at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/financialResources.shtml> or contact Erika Bonenfant at 287-5681 or [erika.bonenfant@maine.gov](mailto:erika.bonenfant@maine.gov).

## Unaccounted-for-Water and Water Audits

*Norm Lamie, Assistant Director & Chief Engineer*

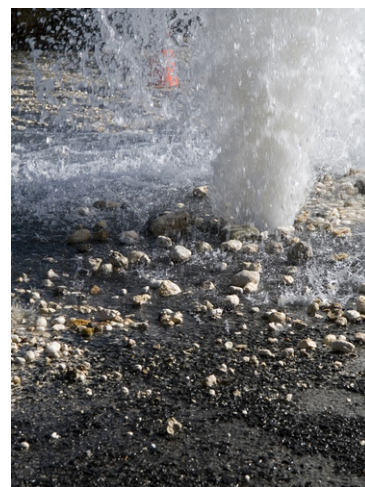
In 2014, the Drinking Water Program completed an analysis of Non-Revenue and Unaccounted-for-Water using data from Annual Reports prepared by approximately 150 Community Public Water Systems regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. This analysis revealed a significantly higher-than-expected number of public water systems with high percentages of both Non-Revenue and Unaccounted-for-Water.

Of the 104 public water systems that reported information in their Annual Reports to the Public Utilities Commission, ten public water systems reported Non-Revenue water exceeding 50%. Another twelve reported values over 40% and another eighteen reported over 30%.

Although Maine is fortunate to have an abundant natural resource, the cost of treatment, pumping, storage, and distribution to our customers is directly impacted by levels of unaccounted-for-water. I'm sure none of us would want to be at a rate increase hearing and have to explain why we don't really know where all our production water is going.

With a goal of better understanding, and hopefully reducing, unaccounted water levels at our public water systems, the 2015 DWSRF Intended Use Plan will include funding within the Capacity Development Work Plan to undertake Water Audits at up to 25 public water systems using methodology described in the American Water Works Association "Water Audits and Loss control Program M-36."

Should you have any questions, or have ideas on how to best proceed with this effort, please contact Norm Lamie at (207) 287-2647 or e-mail [norm.lamie@maine.gov](mailto:norm.lamie@maine.gov).



## Service Connection

### 2015 DWSRF Update

Norm Lamie, Assistant Director & Chief Engineer

A total of 39 DWSRF project applications have been received, totaling over \$38 Million of drinking water infrastructure improvements for the 2015 DWSRF. This amount is a 58% increase in funding requests from last year. Unfortunately, the \$19 Million available will only provide financing assistance to half of the requests. The following table lists the types of project applications:

# of projects	%	\$ Requested	Type of Project
3	14%	\$5,375,220	Treatment
3	6%	\$2,317,960	Source: new or rehab well
2	13%	\$4,933,018	Pumping/Instrumentation
4	13%	\$4,911,413	Tanks: new or repainting
21	45%	\$17,234,841	Main Replace./Rehab
3	4%	\$1,468,925	Meter Replacement
3	6%	\$2,126,787	Re-Finance
<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$38,368,164</b>	<b>All Projects</b>

A copy of the Draft 2015 Primary List and Backup List is available on the Drinking Water Program web site at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/srf.shtml>.



The State Match to access the 2015 DWSRF federal funds is not fully available. The November 4, 2014 Referendum question approved \$1.8 Million of State Match funding, which met the entire 2014 DWSRF need, and a portion of the 2015 State Match need. The balance on the State Match needed for the 2015 SRF is expected from revenues from the Wholesale Liquor Contract, with projected revenues of \$1.3 Million available by June 30, 2015.

With an increasing emphasis by EPA for all states to reduce levels of unspent funds, the pressure to keep projects moving forward quickly to completion will continue. PWSs with active DWSRF funded projects will be required to keep their projects moving forward in a timely fashion.

For questions or more information about the 2015 DWSRF contact Norm Lamie at 287-2647 or [norm.lamie@maine.gov](mailto:norm.lamie@maine.gov).



## ENFORCEMENT CORNER

### Public Notification Rule Violations Paving The Road to Enforcement

Tera Pare, Enforcement & Rulemaking Coordinator & Dawn Abbott, Enforcement Specialist

In 2013, the Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) issued 336 violations to public water systems for failing to comply with the Public Notification Rule. This state and federal regulation enforced by the DWP requires public water systems (PWSs) to notify its consumers when they commit certain violations AND provide certification to the DWP that the notification to consumers happened.

**What Do I Do if I Receive a Public Notification Rule Violation?** If you receive a letter called a “Notice of Noncompliance” for the Public Notification Rule, it means that your PWS failed to either notify the public or report to the DWP that notification happened. If, for example, your PWS failed to collect a sample, report sample results on time, or your PWS reported sample results above the allowable limit resulting in a violation, your PWS was also required to notify the public and tell us that you completed that action.

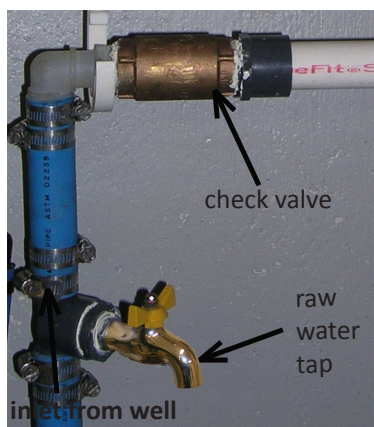
1. The first step to achieve full compliance with the Public Notification Rule is to assure that the Public Notice/ Certification Form enclosed with your "Notice of Noncompliance" is completely filled out and posted in either a conspicuous place/common area within the facility/ restaurant/ lodging area/ school's common area. Or, in the case of a mobile home park or apartment complex, delivery door to door. The Public Notification Instructions will explain the specific requirements of delivery for your specific type of PWS.
2. After Step #1 above, you must send a copy of the Public Notice/ Certification Form to the DWP by mail, email, or fax. Until both steps of this process are completed, the Public Notification Rule violation remains on your PWS record and can lead to further violations and possible formal Enforcement, which can be a timely and costly road for your PWS.

**How Does My PWS Avoid Public Notification Rule Violations In the First Place?** The best possible advice we can provide you is to read all DWP's letters carefully. If you follow the instructions from the very first letter you receive, then no violation for the Public Notification Rule will occur. If you ever have any questions about what is required, please do not hesitate to call or email the DWP contact on the letter.

## Raw Water Sampling Taps

*Erika Bonenfant, Education & Outreach Coordinator*

Chances are by now, with a few years since the introduction of the Ground Water Rule, you've heard of the term, "raw water sampling tap," also known as a "source water sampling tap" or "well water tap." All new and existing public water systems are required to have a raw water sampling tap located prior to any storage or treatment. The Drinking Water Program has recently put together a guidance document to outline the proper design and installation guidelines for raw water sampling taps at public water systems. Visit our webpage at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com) to review the new raw water sampling tap guidance document. As always, you can call your field inspector for questions about a raw water sampling tap at your water system.



## Source Protection - Don't Stop Achieving

*Michael Abbott, Hydrogeologist*

The Source: where it all starts. As a public water system, you have hopefully secured a plentiful supply of good, clean drinking water for you and your customers. It may not be the perfect source. Perhaps the yield of your well could be a little higher in the summertime. Or the turbidity in your pond or river source goes up every time it rains. But you've developed ways to deal with these changes. You've added storage or a second well to handle periods of drought. You've fine-tuned your treatment so the water stays clear even through a downpour in June. But think about the jam you'd be in if you lost your source due to a ruptured heating oil tank close to your well. Or what if the yield or quality were degrading slowly over time because of changes in land use on nearby properties, or on your own property, for that matter? You could address some of these problems with more storage or more complex treatment. But this means more money and time spent, and the possibility of more customer complaints if you're not able to stay ahead of it all. This is why protecting your source is so important and why almost everything the Water Resources Team does here at the Drinking Water Program centers around promoting source protection and helping our public water systems get the most out of their source protection efforts.

Every year, each state must report to EPA on the number of community water systems that are achieving "substantial implementation" in terms of source water protection, based on that state's definition of what substantial implementation means, which is another way of saying that a source is protected. In Maine, a source is considered protected according to the following conditions:

- Any public water system that owns, or has an ordinance



or other binding land use control in place for the entire delineated source water protection area is considered protected.

- Ground water systems which are implementing wellhead protection management plans, including contingency plans, are also considered to be protected.
- Surface water systems are considered protected if the system has a watershed protection plan and is meeting the plan's requirements. These plans are also required under the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) to allow the system avoid filtration.

Other than surface water systems that need to maintain avoidance to filtration under the SWTR, source water protection is practiced on a more or less voluntary basis. However, any PWS that wishes to be granted a Phase II/V waiver from synthetic organic compounds (SOC) sampling must have an approved wellhead or watershed protection plan and be able to produce an updated list of potential sources of contamination (PSCs) that could introduce pesticides, herbicides, and other semi-volatile chemicals into the water. Additionally, with the upcoming revised total coliform rule (RTCR), community groundwater systems (serving less than 1000 people) will have the opportunity to seek reduced Total Coliform monitoring (quarterly instead of monthly) if they maintain a clean compliance history and have a protected source (among other requirements).

*Continued on page 7...*

# Water Operator Board News

*Teresa Trott, Licensing Officer*



**Job Analysis Review**– The Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) reviews exam questions periodically. In order to choose appropriate exam questions, ABC must know what tasks an operator performs related to his or her license. All licensed operators are invited to take a 15-20 minute survey on the tasks performed at their plants or in their systems. Please only respond to the survey for the license held: <http://www.abccert.org/enewsletter/JobAnalysis.html>.

**License Renewal**– A majority of operators have renewed on time, however, some have called asking for an extension. State law allows for a 60 day "grace period" for license renewal. March 2, 2015 is the deadline for this grace period. If the license is not renewed by March 2, 2015, the license is inactivated, and a reinstatement fee of \$50 is assessed if renewal is requested. Additionally, if you are a designated operator for a Public Water System, the system could receive a notice of non-compliance for "operating without a licensed operator." There are many classes available to help you fulfill your TCH requirements in-person, online, or over the web. For more information on available training, visit the DWP Water Operator Training and Professional Development webpage or call Terry at 287-7485.

**Spring Cleaning**– While the winter days allow a little time for tidying up and planning for 2015, why not take some time to put a folder on your desktop or, if paper, in the desk drawer titled, "Training Opportunities." Plan what you would like to learn this year. Look over the training calendar on the DWP website and go a little further into the providers' websites to see what they might be offering, or read those mailed brochures. If you don't see the topic you want, call or email a provider or Terry and suggest the topic. Fill that folder with completed certificates of the training you take this year. Renewal will be so easy!

## New Treatment Review and Approval Process

*Nathan Saunders, Field Inspection Team Leader*

An important function that the Drinking Water Program (DWP) provides is the review and approval of additions, modifications, and removal of treatment processes including changes in chemical addition. The Maine Rules Relating to Drinking Water state that "No new construction, addition or alteration involving the source, treatment, or storage of water in any system shall be commenced until the plans and specifications have been submitted to and approved in writing by the [DWP]." Given the wide range of drinking water treatment complexity, the review process can be basic or it can be complicated and technically challenging. For years, DWP personnel have completed the necessary reviews using the knowledge that each individual had, including other staff in the review as needed. In 2013, to provide public water systems a more consistent and higher level technical review of treatment proposals, the DWP assembled a cross functional team and began a several-month effort to develop the "Drinking Water Treatment Review and Approval Policy and Procedure." **This document provides several important tools used for reviewing treatment proposals:**



1. Documented policy for treatment chemical and process addition, change, and removal.
2. Detailed procedures and checklists for both Field Inspectors and Compliance Officers for completing treatment proposal review;
3. Descriptions of common contaminants and removal technologies; and
4. Case studies providing history and guidance for addressing specific issues.

For public water systems that propose treatment additions or changes, it is necessary to provide the DWP with the information needed to perform the review and approval. The DWP now provides comprehensive guidance on what information is needed in the "Treatment Review and Approval Application." Since the application is used for treatment proposals that range from simple to complex, only the information that applies to the proposal at hand needs to be filled in on the application. The Treatment Review and Approval Policy and Procedure and the Treatment Review and Approval Application can be found on the DWP website by going to [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com), clicking on the "Public Water Systems" link and then "Treatment" link. Please remember to allow 30 days for review. If you have questions on this document or application, please contact me 287-5685 or [nathan.saunders@maine.gov](mailto:nathan.saunders@maine.gov).

## The Drinking Water Program Newsletter

### 'Source Protection' Continued from page 5...

So wouldn't it be nice if the definition of "protected" was uniform for DWP's reporting to EPA, determination of SOC waivers and reduced monitoring under the RTCR? That is exactly our goal. To improve our assessment and tracking of how well Maine drinking water sources are protected, the DWP is modifying the list of questions that will be asked at each sanitary survey to include a variation of the following based on system type and size:

1. Do you own the entire amount of land encompassed by the delineated source water protection area?
2. Are zoning ordinances, or other legal restrictions in place in the source protection area?
3. Is your Sourcewater Protection Plan (Watershed Protection Plan for surface water systems, Wellhead Protection Plan for groundwater) up-to-date and actively being used?
4. When was your sourcewater protection plan (SWPP) last updated, and can you produce a copy of the updated plan?
5. Have recommended protection activities in the SWPP been implemented within the last three years? Examples might include:
  - Reduction or elimination of PSCs identified in

plan;

- Use of Best Management Practices to reduce identified threats to the source within the source protection area; or
- Public outreach and education to increase landowners' and the general public's awareness of the need for source water protection.

If your PWS does not yet have a plan, we can help. A new guidance document is in the works that will provide a template for a PWS to create their own SWPP. And if you prefer to hire a consultant to perform an assessment of your source's vulnerability and prepare the SWPP, there is financial help available through our annual Wellhead Protection and Source Water Protection grant programs. The 2015 deadline for these grants is March 30, 2015. You can contact Erika Bonenfant, our Education and Outreach Coordinator on the DWP Water Resources Team for more information on the grant programs at 287-5681 or [erika.bonenfant@maine.gov](mailto:erika.bonenfant@maine.gov).

Protection of source water isn't easy or quick. And it is not something that is ever really finished. Even if you own your entire source protection area, you still need to be watchful and thoughtful about what goes on within it. So please, keep up the good work and contact us if we can help!

## The Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR): Impacts on Monitoring Frequency for Small Water Systems

The RTCR will have an impact on the monitoring frequency for many small water systems. For example, community systems serving a population under 1,000 will be required to monitor for Total Coliform monthly unless the water system meets water quality and protective practices. Poor water quality or failure to monitor will keep a water system on monthly sampling.

Non-seasonal, non-community systems including non-transient, non-community systems will be allowed to monitor for bacteria quarterly but will be increased to monthly if the water system does not meet water quality standards and have protective practices in place. Seasonal systems have unique requirements under the RTCR and will be discussed further in a future article.

The RTCR becomes effective April 1, 2016. At that time, the DWP will review the past 12 months of monitoring and water quality. Systems with a clean compliance history may be allowed to maintain quarterly bacterial monitoring. Other system specifics to allow this reduced level of monitoring will be reviewed during sanitary surveys. A clean compliance

history means no bacterial MCL exceedances, no monitoring violations, and no treatment techniques violations. A further discussion of treatment technique violations will be explored in a future article.

The important take-away message is: please be careful when sampling. Remember proper technique. Check our website for directions or follow lab directions. You may even Google "Drinking Water Sampling" for a video. Poor sampling is costly in the present. Extra costs could carry over for a year or more.

Training organizations will be holding classes on the RTCR and specific parts of the rule starting this spring. Classes will be listed on the DWP Training Calendar. It is very important for systems to understand the changes. If you are interested in discussing the changes and how DWP can best help your system stay in compliance please contact Terry Trott at 287-7485 or email at [teresa.trott@maine.gov](mailto:teresa.trott@maine.gov).





Department of Health  
and Human Services

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