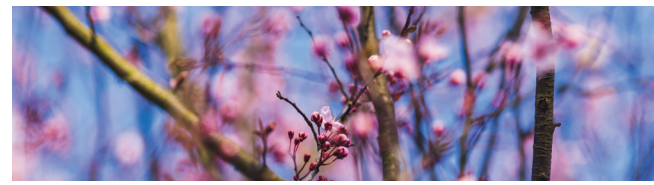


Service Connection

The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water"

Spring 2016 • Volume 24, Issue 1



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The Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) is Here!

Erika Bonenfant, Education and Outreach Coordinator

After much anticipation, the Revised Total Coliform Rule is now here and in effect!

Seasonal Startup Plans

One of the biggest impacts the Revised Total Coliform Rule has is on seasonal water systems, (those non-community public water systems with an annual operating period of less than 12 months). Examples include, but are not limited to, golf courses, campgrounds, boys and girls camps, ski resorts, and some restaurants, inns and motels. If your water system is a seasonal water system, then the RTCR requires that you conduct an annual startup procedure each year before you open and begin serving water. The startup procedure must be approved by the Maine Drinking Water Program, and you must certify that you have completed the approved procedure is completed.

To help you satisfy this requirement, the Drinking Water Program has created a guidance document titled, "Approved Startup Procedure for Maine Seasonal Public Water Systems

Using Groundwater" for use when starting up your water system. Follow the procedures outlined in the document, and then certify it is complete, by signing the form at the bottom and sending the form into the Drinking Water Program. You will need to complete the startup procedure and send in the certification form *before* you open for the season. To obtain the Drinking Water Program's Approved Startup Procedure document, go to www.medwp.com, click on the link to the "Revised Total Coliform Rule" under "What's New?" and then go to the "Startup Procedures" section. There are two documents available, one for seasonal water systems using groundwater (wells) and one for those seasonal water systems using surface water.

Response to Total Coliform Positive Results

Another big change resulting from the Revised Total Coliform Rule is the response to positive total coliform sample results. Under the RTCR, a positive total coliform sample will require water systems to conduct either a Level 1 or Level 2 Assessment of their water system, depending on the situation, to

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Find us on Facebook!

The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program is now on Facebook! We've recently created a Facebook page. If you use Facebook, you can find us by searching Facebook for "Maine CDC Drinking Water Program." You can then "Like" our page to receive our page postings and announcements. We will use the Facebook page to post reminders for sampling and monthly operating reports, training announcements, and other relevant information and news in drinking water.

Don't worry if you don't use Facebook; the Facebook page will not take the place of any of our other communication systems, including our newsletter, our website or our direct contact with you, our public water systems. We hope you will find the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program Facebook page an additional resource to you as you meet your responsibilities as a public water system in Maine.



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

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DIRECTOR'S *Corner*

Are We Getting Wiser?

It has been said that smart people learn from their mistakes and wise people learn from the mistakes of others. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan, although very real and unfortunate to those who live there, can serve as an opportunity for those of us in the public health industry to become wiser.

Given the differences between Flint and water systems in Maine, it is hard to imagine that anything so dramatic could occur in Maine in relation to drinking water quality. However, the story of Flint reminds us that the work we do makes a difference to the health and safety of Maine people.

Although much will be written in the months and years ahead about what went wrong in Flint, we still don't have enough details to completely understand how the water quality could be so poor for so long without appropriate safety warnings. We do know, however, that this tragic situation was preventable.

In Maine, we are fortunate to have abundant sources of clean water in almost all areas of the State. However, that does not negate our need to be vigilant in implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act.



With news story after news story about the events in Flint, Congress and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be responding to the public outcry and criticism through changes to the Lead and Copper Rule, as well as EPA's role in overseeing state drinking water programs. The Drinking Water Program will keep you abreast of all new developments.

Please contact me or my staff if you have any questions or concerns about how to continue providing staff drinking water and may your wisdom ever increase.

Yours for safe drinking water,

Roger

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The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Maine Human Rights Act. Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS's ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator, State House Station #11, Augusta, Maine 04333, (207) 287-4289 (V), 711 (Maine Relay) (TTY). Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in program and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator. This notice is available in alternate formats.

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Lead and Copper Rule Reminders

Lead and Copper samples should be collected from the correct Tier Sites.

Tier 1 sampling sites are single family structures with copper pipes with lead solder installed after 1982, but before 1986, or contain lead pipes; and/or that are served by a lead service line. Note: When multiple-family residences comprise at least 20% of the structures served by a water system, the system may count them as Tier 1 sites.

Tier 2 sampling sites consist of buildings, including multiple family homes with copper pipes with lead solder installed after 1982, but before 1986, or contain lead pipes; and/or that are served by a lead service line.

Tier 3 sampling sites are single family structures with copper pipes having lead solder installed before 1983. Sites that are selected should be ones that are typically used for consuming water. In residential homes, kitchen and bathroom fixtures are appropriate locations.

If your system is changing sample locations, please note the change, as well as the Tier designation of the new site on the paperwork (Form 141-A) provided by your laboratory.

Please remember that you must supply a copy of the lead test results within 30 days, to all persons served by the water tap that was sampled.

Non-transient non-community systems (schools, businesses and factories) may post results for employees, staff and students to see. The consumer notice must include the results of lead tap water monitoring for the tap that was tested, an explanation of the health effects of lead, a list of steps consumers may follow to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water and contact information for the water utility. The notice must also provide the maximum contaminant level goal and the action level for lead as well as the definitions for these two terms.

Mitchell Center to Study Potential for Cyanotoxins in Maine Public Water Supplies

Michael Abbott, Hydrogeologist

The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program has accepted a proposal from the University of Maine's Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions to perform a State-wide cyanotoxin study. The overall goal of this project will be to determine the risks from harmful algal blooms (HABs) - particularly those associated with cyanobacteria - to impact public water suppliers using surface water sources in Maine.

As stated in the Mitchell Center's proposal, the occurrence and characteristics of HABs is a significant and emergent concern, because of the consequences to human and ecological health (USEPA, 2015; Brooks, et al., 2016).

Conditions that produce algae blooms also raise the concern that surface drinking water supplies may be at risk from cyanobacteria and associated cyanotoxins (Touchette et al., 2007). Cyanobacteria can produce several types of toxins, such as neurotoxins, hepatotoxins (liver toxins) or dermal irritants. Species of concern observed in Maine lakes include: Anabaena, Aphanizomenon, Coelosphaerus, Gloeotrichia, Gloeocapsa, Merismopedia, Microcystis, Nostoc, Planktothrix, and Woronichinia.

Continued on page 4...

New Recommendations from EPA Concerning Collection of Lead and Copper Rule Samples

Carlton Gardner, Compliance and Enforcement Team Leader

In a letter dated February 29, 2016, Peter Grevatt, Director of the Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, made the following recommendations regarding lead and copper sampling:

- Sampling instructions should no longer recommend the flushing of the cold water tap before the start of the 6-hour stagnation, or no use time, for samples collected under the Lead and Copper Rule. EPA believes this "pre-stagnation" flushing may potentially lower lead results as compared to when it is not practiced.
- EPA also recommends the use of wide-mouth sample bottles, in order to allow for a more rapid filling of sample bottles. EPA indicates that rapid filling of bottles is more representative of how a consumer may fill a glass. The rapid flow may also release lead particles and, therefore, is more conservative in identifying lead concentrations.
- EPA reiterated its 2006 recommendation to not remove and/or clean aerators before the collection of lead and copper samples.

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Continued from Cover...

determine the problem and find a solution. More information on triggering and conducting Level 1 and Level 2 Assessments can be found on the DWP's RTCR webpage.

Change in Total Coliform Sampling Frequency

Some public water systems with a quarterly total coliform monitoring schedule may now be faced with the possibility of changing to monthly total coliform monitoring. The reason for this potential change is because the RTCR sets the default monitoring frequency for certain water system types as monthly for total coliform bacteria. Those water systems include seasonal water systems and community systems serving a population under 1,000. If your water system falls into either of these categories, and you are currently on quarterly monitoring, then your total coliform monitoring frequency may change. An evaluation at your next sanitary survey will determine if a change is required. There are certain criteria to enable these

types of water systems to maintain a quarterly total coliform monitoring frequency. These criteria include the following:

- ✓ Approved sample site plan with identified optimal time for monitoring
- ✓ Clean compliance history for total coliform over the last 12 months
- ✓ Free from sanitary defects or have an approved corrective action plan
- ✓ A completed sanitary survey or Level 2 Assessment within the last 12 months
- ✓ Protected source

The Drinking Water Program is here to help you navigate your new responsibilities under the RTCR. Please feel free to call your field inspector or compliance officer, if you have any questions about your responsibilities under the new RTCR. Please also visit the DWP's RTCR webpage for more information about the RTCR.

'Cyanotoxins' continued from page 3...

The Mitchell Center proposes to use a combination of historical data analysis, compilation of water utility observations and a field-based study of algae and cyanotoxin (e.g. microcystin) in surface waters. Five objectives are proposed, as follows:

Objective 1- Analyze Data for Multi-Year Water Quality

Trends. Changes in water quality over time can provide indicators of HAB risk since cyanobacteria and algae blooms are driven in part by nutrient availability (Yuan et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2003, Downing et al., 2001). Also, temperature and seasonality affect HAB occurrences; therefore, trends in these physical properties are important (Carey et al., 2012).

Objective 2- Document Site Specific Bloom History.

Independent of water quality data sets are observations or other water clarity measurements related to blooms. Operators may have records related to treatment difficulties due to algal biomass and anecdotal observations on bloom history and behavior.

Objective 3- Collect Field Data. Collect data this field season (April-October 2016) for as many water systems and times as possible, to determine existing water quality and algal presence. Site data collection will occur in two tiers. Tier 1 is routine site surveillance under ambient conditions during the warm-weather season. Tier 2 is bloom monitoring to sample the higher risk events. Only a sub-set of surface water systems will be sampled under Tier 2, the actual sites will be selected in consultation with the Drinking Water Program. To the extent possible, Tier 2 samples will be collected during the highest risk period for cyanobacteria blooms.

Objective 4- Generate a Site Specific Risk Profile. An

integration of water quality trends, algae bloom history, taste and odor episodes and source water protection assessments can be used to produce a relative risk or susceptibility index. A statistical process will be devised for assigning relative risk to each surface water source. In this case risk is defined as the potential occurrence of a cyanobacteria bloom. To the extent possible, this will include source water nutrient chemistry, watershed activities and hydro-climate drivers of algae blooms.

Objective 5- Establish HAB Monitoring Protocol. Results from this project will include recommendations for general and specific site monitoring plans.

For each water source included in this study, products will include:

- a site-specific and generalized summary of historical water quality data and algal bloom occurrences;
- a summary of water utilities operators' information about water quality and algae blooms;
- a statistical analysis of water quality indicator trends and an interpretation of the direction of trends for individual systems;
- a summary of algae taxa found in water supply ponds based on grab samples and
- a preliminary screening of algae bloom waters for the presence of selected cyanotoxins.

The anticipated outcomes and products for this project will help the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program and public water suppliers evaluate risk from HABs in surface water supplies and develop strategies to monitor and manage drinking water intakes threatened by blooms.





Drinking Water Rulemaking Update

Tera Pare, Enforcement and Rulemaking Coordinator

At the time of this publication, the Drinking Water Program anticipates that rulemaking changes to both the Rules Relating to Drinking Water and the Rules Relating to Bulk Water (formerly known as the Rules Relating to Bottled Water, Bulk Water and Water Vending Machines) will be adopted. To know the latest news or learn more about the actual changes being adopted, please go to the Drinking Water Program website or call Tera Pare directly at 287-5680.

Source Protection Status Can Impact Your Sampling Requirements

Erika Bonenfant, Education and Outreach Coordinator

With the newly-effective Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR), you will likely be hearing more about the source protection status of your public water system (if you haven't already). The reason is because the RTCR includes provisions for when a water system qualifies for a reduced monitoring frequency for total coliform bacteria, and source protection status is one of them. Under the RTCR, seasonal water systems and community water systems serving less than 1,000 people have a monthly sampling frequency for total coliform bacteria. However, if a water system of this type meets certain criteria under the RTCR, including having what is considered to be a "protected source," the frequency may be reduced to quarterly for total coliform bacteria.



Protection status is also important for those water systems with a default total coliform bacteria monitoring frequency of quarterly. Non-seasonal and non-community water systems serving fewer than 1,000 people have a default monitoring frequency of quarterly for total coliform bacteria under the RTCR. However, if any of these water systems run into an issue which requires their total coliform monitoring frequency to increase to monthly, (due to positive bacteria sample results or problems with monitoring and reporting), then the water system will need to have what is considered a "protected source," in order to return to their default quarterly monitoring frequency for total coliform bacteria.

What is considered a "protected source" under the RTCR?

Two conditions must be met in order for a water system to have what is considered a "protected source" under the RTCR. First, a water system must have one of the following: an active and up-to-date source water protection plan, own their entire source protection area or have a legal ordinance in place which protects their source protection area. Second, a water system must have no microbiological potential sources of contamination (PSCs) within 300 feet of their source (examples include leachfields, manure piles and spreading, organic waste, etc.). More detailed information about determining source protection status under the RTCR can be found on the RTCR website, under the "Source Protection" section. Go to www.medwp.com, click on the "Revised Total Coliform Rule" link under "What's New?" and then see the "Source Protection" section on the RTCR page.

Source Protection Status is also important for SOC Waivers

The source protection status of your water system is not only important for determining your eligibility for reduced frequency for total coliform monitoring but also has an impact on your eligibility to obtain a waiver for sampling for certain synthetic organic compounds, also called an SOC Waiver. Without a protected source, water systems will not be eligible to obtain an SOC Waiver. For SOC Waiver determination, a water system must meet the same conditions for source protection status under the RTCR except that instead of having "no microbiological potential sources of contamination (PSCs) within 300ft of their source," a water system must have no potential sources of contamination or activities that could lead to the presence of synthetic organic compounds within 2,500 feet of their water source(s). Examples include the presence of railroads, pesticide or herbicide use, dry cleaners, sludge spreading, airports, etc.

More information about drinking water source protection can be found on the DWP's Source Protection page, by going www.medwp.com, clicking on the "Public Water Systems" link and then on the "Source Protection" link.



Water Operator News and Reminders

Teresa Trott, Licensing Officer

Board News

This year sees changes in faces at the Board. After serving on the Board since 1996, Chris Crovo, P.E. recently resigned. Thank you, Chris, for your many years of service. Appointed to the engineer representative is Brian Tarbuck, P.E., General Manager of Greater Augusta Utilities District. The managerial representative seat that was open for some time has been filled by Jon Ziegra, Superintendent of Boothbay Region Water District. The DHHS seat has been filled by Roger Crouse. Staff directly assisting the Board are Julia Kimball, (DWP clerk), and Teresa Trott, licensing officer. These changes build a well-staffed and experienced Board. The Board continues to review important operator needs and ensure availability of continuing education.

Exam results

2015 proved a very active year for the operator profession in Maine. The passing rate is improving, with 60% of the 171 exams administered receiving a passing score. The mean scores are still low, however. Computer based testing allows the opportunity to take or re-take exams when you are

prepared and in a quiet atmosphere.

Operator Responsibility

Operators are the first line of defense, when it comes to assuring safe and reliable water. An operator is licensed to operate certain classifications of systems. The knowledge, experience and continuing education help assure water safety. Communication with decision makers and the public is necessary and part of the basis of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Thankfully, there are not a lot of big-news water crises. Those that do happen, come down to operations and often how the operation is controlled by financial measures instead of public safety measures. Water operators provide water for drinking, fire fighting and sanitary purposes. The price to build, treat and deliver water is not minor. Planning, preparation and communication help operators avoid a crisis. Take a moment to review the Professional Code of Ethics on the DWP's Water Operator Board website, and keep in mind how these might relate to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

The Power of Being Proactive: One System's Positive Total Coliform Success Story

Holly Hockertlotz, Compliance Officer

A seasonal transient public water system on quarterly bacteria monitoring was notified of a total coliform positive, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) negative result in September 2015. Maine Rural Water Association was contacted to collect rechecks for the system, which indicated that both the raw water and distribution were positive for total coliform. At this point, the system attempted shocking the well; however, the following month, all distribution samples were again positive for total coliform. Maine Rural Water Association continued to work with the system to identify the source of the bacteria within the system. Several rounds of disinfection and O&M samples were collected, indicating that the underlying problem had not yet been identified. By this time, the system had closed for the season.

The system decided to camera the well to determine if a sanitary defect could be identified. Through this process, a damaged area of casing was found. A sleeve was installed within the well and the system planned to collect O&M bacteria samples once the well was fully flushed and shocked. This system plans to continue to collect O&M samples to ensure that by the time compliance samples are collected in May 2016, the underlying water quality is again bacteriologically sound. Throughout this entire process, the system stayed in close contact with their compliance officer to keep the Drinking Water Program apprised of their progress and challenges. The system also praised Steve White of Maine Rural Water Association for being "absolutely awesome" throughout the process and an invaluable resource for identifying the underlying cause of the positive bacteriological samples. Should your system find itself in a similar situation, remember that assistance is available from Drinking Water Program staff and the Maine Rural Water Association.

Androscoggin River Chemical Spill Tabletop Exercise Brings Together First Responders, Water System Personnel, and State and Local Agencies

Michael Abbott, Hydrogeologist

On Tuesday, February 2, 43 people participated in a full scale Androscoggin River Chemical Spill Tabletop Exercise (TTX) at the Topsham Public Safety Building. Logistics were provided by Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA) through an EPA grant. Facilitation of the spill scenario was provided by the Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). This exercise followed a January 21 Chemical Spill Workshop and Orientation, which included speakers from Maine CDC Drinking Water Program (DWP), Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), MEMA, the Brunswick and Topsham Water District and the Brunswick Fire Department.

In this TTX scenario, a traffic accident involving a fuel tanker and a truck containing compressed natural gas (CNG) cylinders resulted in the release of gasoline and diesel fuel into a small stream near water supply wells of the Brunswick Topsham Water District, threatening the wells, the nearby Androscoggin River and potentially other public water system wells located downstream from the spill site. Release of propane gas created a dangerous situation at the crash scene and surrounding areas, delaying cleanup of the spilled fuel. Later in the day, another hypothetical accident involving a propane tanker and garbage truck occurred in a different part of town, creating high water demand in that area and resulting in a water main break and pressure drop in the water line running to Midcoast Hospital. This combination of unexpected events created challenges to protect public safety, maintain service to water customers and mitigate impacts to the environment.

The purpose of this type of TTX is to prepare public water systems in Maine and state and local emergency responders to react effectively to a chemical spill impacting a surface drinking water supply or wells near the affected water body. The origin and planning of these exercises resulted from collaboration among the DWP, MRWA and DEP following the January 9, 2014 Elk River chemical spill in West Virginia. The Elk River spill resulted in a “Do Not Use” water advisory affecting 300,000 consumers in the Charleston, West Virginia area for a two-week period until the spill was under control and the drinking water system flushed. The recent Flint, Michigan water supply lead contamination incident was also highlighted at the TTX to emphasize the importance of clear risk communications during any incident that may threaten drinking water quality.

At the responder’s “on scene command” table, the DEP responders worked with Incident Commander Chief Ken



First responders strategize during the Androscoggin River Chemical Spill Tabletop on February 2, 2016 in Topsham.

Brilliant of the Brunswick Fire Department, providing critical initial spill control strategies and practical health and safety information to Brunswick and Topsham Fire and Police Departments. The DWP, the water and sewer utilities, local EMAs, MEMA, the Coast Guard and representatives from Midcoast Hospital worked in a separate room to receive updates from responders on the scene and follow their emergency response plans to implement appropriate communications and other response actions including communication with the public based on incoming information.

In this mock spill scenario, response actions and coordination among players was very efficient due primarily to the close and continual cooperation and relationships between the Topsham and Brunswick Fire and Police Departments and the Brunswick and Topsham Water District. This exercise not only crossed municipal boundaries but also county lines, highlighting the equally strong relationship between the Cumberland and Sagadahoc County Emergency Management Agencies.

An example of one direct takeaway from the TTX is that a critical partner in the region’s response capabilities – Midcoast Hospital – will be updating their Emergency Water Supply/Management Plan for a possible water outage during such a major emergency event. Maine CDC’s Drinking Water Program also identified several opportunities to improve and update their emergency response plan for more efficient inter-agency communication during an event affecting a Maine public water system.



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