

# Service Connection

The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

*"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water"*

Fall 2016 • Volume 24, Issue 3

## The 2016 Drought How Bad Is It?

*Michael Abbott, Assistant Program Director & Chief Engineer*

It has been a “wicked dry year” in Maine. Well, in some parts of Maine. The low snowfall and warm temperatures we experienced last winter resulted in minimal spring melt and runoff. That, combined with the relative lack of spring rainfall, set us up for what some would consider a real drought. In fact it has been dry – too dry for lawns and gardens (at least my garden) to thrive. And too dry to keep rivers flowing, lakes filled to their normal levels, and groundwater levels in wells up where they should be. But I always thought that in Maine if you didn’t like the weather you only had to wait a few minutes, right? This hasn’t been the case as the warm sunny weather has continued in the southern and central parts of the state. Good for the tourism industry; not so good for recharging water supplies.

As of September 26, 2016, the National Drought Mitigation Center’s U.S. Drought Monitor estimated that approximately sixty-five percent of Maine’s population resides in drought areas. However, the dry conditions appear to be limited to the southern half of the state. The bad news for some is that portions of York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, Kennebec, Waldo, and Knox counties, and all of Sagadahoc and Lincoln counties are in “severe drought”. The southern portions of York and Cumberland counties are now considered to be in “extreme drought”. And what might be even worse news for water suppliers in the southwest corner of the state is that the longer term effects of the drought, namely the dropping groundwater levels, might not be corrected quickly even with a wet fall season.

To give some historical perspective, the last major drought in Maine lasted several years, from 1999-2002, with the most severe period between 2001 and 2002, where groundwater levels and stream flows reached record lows. During this period, thirty-five public water suppliers, including eight large community systems, reported

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## Review of Lead and Copper Sample Sites at Schools

*Carlton Gardner*

Since February 2016, lead in drinking water has been highlighted in the news due to high lead levels in drinking water in Flint, Michigan, as well as some schools across the nation. The Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) has been undertaking an onsite review of the lead & copper sampling locations at the approximately 250 schools that are regulated as public water systems. This project is to ensure the schools are collecting lead and copper samples from appropriate sites that are used to obtain drinking water for consumption and/or food preparation.

During August and September, 2016, the DWP contracted with Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA) to schedule and conduct onsite surveys at schools that are required to monitor in 2016. The information gathered during the surveys will be reviewed by DWP staff and letters will be sent to schools with the approved sample locations.

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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

# DIRECTOR'S *Corner*



## Reducing the Risk of Violations by Understanding the Whole System

In 2015 approximately 73 percent of public water systems in Maine did not receive any violations. The remaining 27 percent of systems were issued approximately 1,500 violations (an average of just under 3 violations per system).

The vast majority of the of the violations (more than 80 percent) were related to water systems' failure to collect water samples when required, failure to report, and/or failure to inform customers of a violation. All of these violations were preventable. Health-based violations (water quality issues) were issued to approximately eight percent of Maine's public water systems<sup>1</sup>. Although water quality issues can at times be hard to anticipate, the majority of health-based violations could also be avoided.

Considering your water source, pumps, water treatment and distribution piping and storage as one connected and interdependent system is essential in anticipating and preventing water quality issues.

Examples of changes in one area that could affect another include:

- Shock disinfection of your water system, to address a total coliform positive, could temporarily disrupt the protective scale built-up on your water pipes. If lead and copper samples are taken before the scale on the pipe has been sufficiently rebuilt, you may find that your lead and/or copper samples exceed acceptable levels.
- Failure to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of water treatment generally results in a water quality violation.
- Adding treatment to remove a contaminant without considering the impacts on water chemistry could result in more corrosive water.
- Making chemical changes at the treatment plant to improve the efficiency of your treatment process could impact the effectiveness of your disinfection residual out in the distribution system.

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## Service Connection

The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter

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*Continued from 'Director's Corner'...*

- Making improvements or repairs in the distribution system without taking appropriate precautions to prevent contamination from entering the water system or getting contamination out will likely result in water quality problems putting your customers at risk.

All public water systems must have a person(s) in responsible charge of their water system to ensure water compliance standards are being met as well as to protect public health. Community water systems, non-transient/non-community water systems, and some transient water systems must have a licensed water operator in responsible charge.

For those in responsible charge of a public water system, some questions you should regularly consider include:

- Am I confident that there have not been any changes to my water system's source that would adversely impact water quality?
- Do I know the water treatment system is working properly each day, and am I documenting the treatment operation?
- Do I know when and where to collect water compliance samples, as well as operation and maintenance samples, do I collect them on-time, and do I carefully review the results of these water quality tests?
- Am I aware of changes in the distribution system that could impact water quality and am I taking necessary steps to ensure these impacts are not putting the health of my customers at risk?

Whether it be a violation for failure to collect a sample or a violation due to a water quality issue, violations will cost you time and likely money. The old adage of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" applies to your water system. Taking the time to properly monitor, operate, and maintain your water system will save you much effort in the long run.

As always, my staff and I are here to provide you with information and technical assistance if you need it.

Yours for safe drinking water,

*Roger*

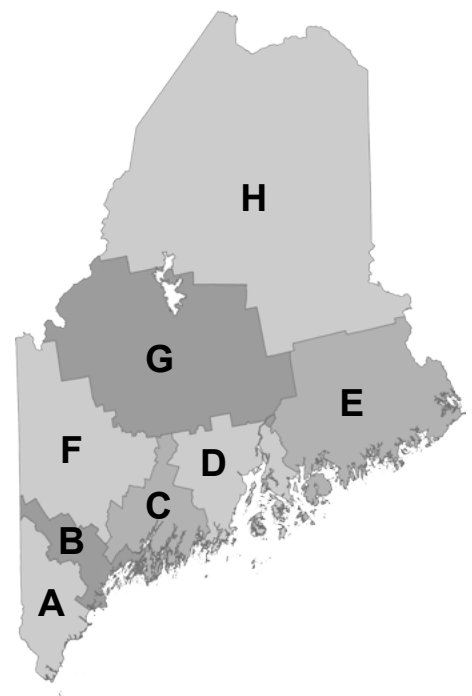
1. Information about public water system compliance rates in Maine can be found in the 2015 *Drinking Water Annual Report*. Turn to page 4 for details.

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## Public Water System Inspector Districts

Contact information for the Drinking Water Program's  
Public Water System Inspectors

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## A Note from Michael Abbott

### Assistant Program Director and Chief Engineer

As some of you already know, I recently moved into the position of Chief Engineer and Assistant Program Director here at the Drinking Water Program. I've met many of you in the water industry over the last three years as I served in the position of Hydrogeologist for the DWP. For those I haven't had the pleasure to get to know, I thought I'd take the opportunity to tell you a little about myself.

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in Civil Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1991, I started my career as a Sanitation Facilities Engineer for the U.S. Public Health Service in northern Wisconsin, where I worked on a variety of water supply and wastewater treatment projects. In 1997 I completed a master's degree in Geology to help round out my understanding of groundwater flow and geochemistry.

Prior to coming to the DWP, I worked for Sevee & Maher Engineers, Inc., and later with Ransom Consulting, Inc., on a variety of water supply development projects, hazardous waste remediation, and civil engineering design for construction work in Maine and other states in the Northeast.

I have been fortunate to have a varied education and work background behind me. But as I write this, I realize I have a tremendous amount to learn in my new position managing the DWSRF projects and helping the Engineering and Water Resources Team to tackle the numerous challenges that come to our attention on an almost daily basis. I look forward to working with all of you as we collectively strive to improve public drinking water quality and service in Maine through installation and upgrades to our sources, treatment facilities and distribution networks.

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## DWP Welcomes Mike Plaziak

### Public Water System Inspection Team Supervisor

Mike Plaziak joined the Drinking Water Program as the Public Water System Inspection Team supervisor in August, 2016.

Mike comes to us from the California EPA where he worked as a supervising engineering geologist for the Lahontan Water Board in the Mojave Desert of



southern California from 1995 to 2016. In this capacity he worked in a number of regulatory programs to protect groundwater and surface resources from mining operations, landfills, underground storage tanks, and wastewater treatment plant discharges. He also worked on Department of Defense cleanup activities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, and oversight of a variety of remediation activities involving low-level radioactive wastes, exotic fuels, hexavalent chromium, and nitrates.

A native of Aroostook County, Mike attended Vanderbilt University and earned his B.S. degree in the Geological

Sciences in 1985. Following graduation, Mike entered the US Marine Corps and served as an Intelligence Officer until 2012, when he retired from service as a Lieutenant Colonel in the reserves. In 2004 Mike earned a Master's Degree in the Geological Sciences from San Diego State University with an emphasis in hydrogeology. Mike is a registered as both a professional geologist in California and a certified geologist in Maine. He is an avid hiker, dual sport motorcyclist, volunteer fire lookout, and holds an Extra class amateur radio license. Mike has three daughters who reside in California.

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## Public Drinking Water in Maine

### Annual Report: 2015

The Drinking Water Program's *Public Drinking Water in Maine Annual Report: 2015* is now available. The report is intended to provide an overview of public water system compliance, quality of public drinking water and the efforts of the Maine Drinking Water Program in ensuring safe drinking water in Maine. The report 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 on "Public Drinking Water in Maine Annual Report 2015."



## Monthly Operating Reports

*Holly Hockertlotz, Rule Specialist*

Monthly Operating Reports (MORs) are a record of system operation, and are helpful for optimizing the disinfection, corrosion control, or other health or aesthetic qualities of water served to consumers. They are required of all Public Water Systems (PWS) that add chemical(s) or use ultraviolet (UV), and must be submitted to the Drinking Water Program (DWP) no later than the 10th of each month following the month or quarter<sup>1</sup> that they cover. MORs are reviewed by the Drinking Water Program for completeness and are indications of poor or improper treatment.

There are fourteen MOR forms, each relating to specific PWS configurations. MORs are required for:

- Surface water and groundwater under the influence of surface water (GUI) PWS (MOR-001)
- Groundwater PWS (MOR-002)
- PWS subject to the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) (MOR-003, MOR-004, MOR-010, MOR-011)
- PWS regulated for disinfection byproducts (DBPs) (MOR-005, MOR-006, MOR-009)
- PWS that have fluoride addition (MOR-008)
- PWS that use chlorine dioxide (MOR-007).

Simplified MORs are available for small PWS:

- Small system chlorination (MOR-012),
- Small and medium system corrosion control (MOR-013)
- Small water system UV (MOR-014).

Municipal water systems that use UV have a more specialized MOR requirement, which includes additional data collection requirements.

MOR guidance and forms can be found on the DWP website (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/mor.shtml>). The forms are available in both Excel and PDF formats.

### How do I know if I am submitting the correct MOR(s)?

The DWP is currently reviewing all MORs submissions and MOR requirements based on our records of treatment

in use at your PWS. Based on this review, your system will receive a letter indicating your MOR requirements. Should you feel there is a discrepancy between the MOR the DWP indicates is required and the MOR your PWS feels more accurately captures your treatment system; please contact your Public Water System Inspector.

### What information is required to be included on MORs each month?

All MORs should include your PWS name, PWS identification number, the month and year the MORs covers, the name and license number of your licensed operator, the signature of your operator (or be emailed directly to the DWP by your operator). For systems that have chemical addition, the name of the chemical, the purpose, the target concentration or pH (corrosion control), the chemical strength, amount of chemical added, and residual (or pH) must be included. If you are completing the small system UV form (MOR-014), please include the dates of your most recent maintenance activities and ensure equipment checks are performed no less than twice per week. In addition, sample collection dates and any issues encountered during the month should be noted in the space provided. Should your system encounter a treatment failure during the month, please contact your Public Water System Inspector immediately. The DWP is committed to protecting public health and would rather work with your system on response activities when a treatment failure occurs than issue violations. Technical assistance is available to you through both the DWP and Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA).

### What do I do if my PWS closes for the season part way through a month or a well/treatment plant is not in use during part or all of a month?

Please submit MORs for all wells and treatment plants during all months of operation. If your PWS is closed during a portion of the month or a well/treatment plant was not in use, you must indicate this on your MOR to avoid receiving a violation for an incomplete MOR. Failure to submit an MOR by the 10th of the month following the month or quarter covered on the MOR will result in a reporting violation, which may affect your water sampling requirements.

1. Quarterly MORs use forms MOR-005 and MOR-006 only.

## Optimized Corrosion Control: It's more than just pH and Alkalinity

*Holly Hockertlotz, Rule Specialist*

Drinking water chemistry is complex and includes a number of compounds and elements that influence both aesthetic and health qualities of the drinking water your Public Water System (PWS) produces. Water quality parameters (WQP) – a term used to refer to the concentration of compounds, elements, and other measurable qualities of drinking water – affect how finished water interacts with the distribution, including service lines, pipes, and fixtures. Several water quality parameters play a role in the corrosivity of water including pH, alkalinity, hardness, conductivity, oxidation-reduction potential (ORP), temperature, total dissolved solids, disinfectant residual, sulfate, chloride, manganese, and iron.

While the Lead and Copper Rule only requires PWSs to monitor for pH, alkalinity, calcium, conductivity, temperature, and inhibitor dosage/residual, many additional WQPs, including those listed above, should be considered when developing or optimizing corrosion control. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published updated guidance on Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment in March, 2016, which can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/epa-recommendations>. This document includes additional details pertaining to the above water quality parameters and their impact on optimizing corrosion control treatment.

When a lead or copper action level exceedance occurs, the Drinking Water Program will require measurements of total alkalinity, calcium, conductivity, pH, and temperature at both the entry point to distribution and at tap locations within the distribution, in accordance with the Lead and Copper Rule. Your PWS will also need to develop an initial or revised corrosion control treatment plan within 6 months. Your corrosion control treatment plan should be developed with a water quality specialist (such as an engineer or other professional experienced in evaluating water chemistry, including the impacts on other treatment processes), who will likely want to evaluate the components of any treatment system(s) you have in place, your distribution system, and water quality parameters. Please note that all corrosion control treatment plans must include a recommendation for chemical addition

and recommended operational ranges for water quality parameters.

Once your system has developed a corrosion control treatment plan, the DWP will evaluate both your plan and water quality parameter data. This will enable the Drinking Water Program to work with your system to establish optimal water quality parameters to expedite a return to compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule. The installation of corrosion control treatment may not be required if the water system has been able to sufficiently remove sources of lead or copper (such as fixture replacement) and the PWS successfully passes two rounds of lead and copper testing before the deadline for treatment installation has passed.

For all systems using chemical addition to return to compliance with the lead and copper rule, a minimum pH of 7.0 is required in all tap samples unless the Drinking Water Program determines that meeting a pH of 7.0 is not technologically feasible or is not necessary for the system to optimize corrosion control. The Drinking Water Program will also establish a minimum pH or range at each entry point to the distribution system. Your system may also be required to monitor for alkalinity, calcium carbonate, silicate, corrosion inhibitor, or other water quality parameters depending on what corrosion control technology your system employs to reduce the corrosivity of water in your public water system. If you are unsure of what minimums or ranges you must maintain for your current corrosion control treatment, please contact your Public Water System Inspector for guidance.

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## Lead and Copper

*Continued from Page 1...*

Lead and copper sample site selections are based on frequency of use, fixture type, age of the plumbing and/or fixture, and age of the population served. Schools that are required to collect lead and copper samples in 2017 or 2018 will be surveyed at a later date

Remember: if any system needs to collect lead and copper samples from locations other than approved locations, you must contact the DWP before sampling.

If you have any questions, please contact your Public Water System Inspector.



## Operator News

*Julia Kimball, Water Operator Board Clerk*

### Renewals

License renewal notices will be mailed by November 1, 2016, for those operators whose licenses expire on December 31, 2016.. Remember: any approved training received *after* your license renews, but before the end of 2016, can be applied to the following renewal cycle.

### Training Credit Hours (TCH)

A reminder for those operators who are renewing their licenses: training contact hours recorded to your license can be checked online. To review the number of TCHs you have achieved, please visit the Water Operator Board page on [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com): from the Drinking Water Program home page, select the link for 'Professionals'; from there, proceed to the Water Operator Board (Licensure) page. Under 'Maintaining Your Operator's License' you will see a link to review TCH records. TCHs are listed next to the operator's license number. Most training providers submit attendance lists following training sessions, however if you see that some of your trainings have not been recorded, please contact Julia Kimball in order to submit training certificates. The report is updated weekly.

### Training Courses

Safety training courses relevant to managing or operating a public water system can count toward license renewal. There is no limit on the number of TCHs allowed for safety training, but keep in mind that any approved training course may be used only once in a renewal cycle.

Contact Julia Kimball with any questions: email [julia.kimball@maine.gov](mailto:julia.kimball@maine.gov) or phone 207-287-5699.

in the southern part of the state through at least the end of this year. And it is somewhat alarming to report that less than a year into the 2016 drought, groundwater levels in some USGS monitoring wells are already lower than they were during the last drought.

What we need to get out of this is a quick return to "normal" conditions: some moderate rain events this fall, followed by a winter with normal (or maybe a bit above normal) precipitation and a wet spring. Rainfall or snow melt when vegetation is dormant is the best timing to get water into the ground and recharge the aquifers. Although big storms might provide a lot of water to help fill lakes and ponds, most of it runs off too quickly to use. And as those with surface water supplies know, this can lead to all kinds of water quality challenges, from turbidity to harmful algal blooms.

If you are experiencing problems related to drought, please contact the DWP to let us know. We can't change the weather but we can offer assistance in terms of identification of emergency bulk water transport options or financial help through the DWSRF Emergency Construction Fund Loan program. Also, please visit the MEDWP website ([www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com)), which contains a new fact sheet on "Preparing, Responding, and Recovering from a Drought". This guidance document lists several options that a public water supplier might be able to use to adjust to drought conditions, including:

- Implementing voluntary or mandatory water conservation measures;
- Bulk water hauling;
- Use of an interconnection with a neighboring water system;
- Extending a surface water intake deeper into the water;
- Lowering well pumps; and/or
- New well construction or modifications to existing wells.

Links to several resources for drought planning and response are also included.

Good luck and let's hope for some rain! But not this weekend; I have plans.

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## The 2016 Drought

*Continued from Page 1...*

severe effects. In addition, approximately 17,000 private wells went dry and farmers lost an estimated \$32M in crop failures. According to the USGS, the Palmer Drought Severity Index (which depicts prolonged drought conditions) for Maine is in the "near normal" range. Unfortunately, drought conditions are forecast to persist



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