

Winter 2015
Volume 8, Issue 2

Wintertime Preparedness

During the last two winters, parts of Ohio have seen greater than normal snowfall and extended periods of time with below zero temperatures or wind chills. Winter weather often stresses water treatment equipment and distribution facilities to the point of failure. Recent examples of winter weather-related incidents at Ohio public water systems include: a small electric heater that failed in the well house; frazil ice plugging a Lake Erie intake serving a major metropolitan area; a frozen pressure transmitter in a small village's single elevated water tower; and a ruptured 24-inch transmission main in the downtown area of a large city. Each of these events had a negative impact on the public water system's customers. Public water systems cannot eliminate these interruptions in service; however, with good planning and preparedness, systems can increase their resiliency and minimize weather-related failures.

It is good practice to visually check all facilities exposed to the weather, such as pumps, valves and pipes, daily throughout the winter season to ensure they are protected properly:

- Ensure all exposed facilities are insulated properly.
- Make sure the heaters in the treatment plant and pump house are in good working condition and vents are closed. Electric heaters should be elevated above floor level in well houses and not placed where water leakage could cause a safety hazard.
- Pump out non-draining fire hydrant barrels and portable pumps to prevent the casing from cracking after use.

In frigid weather, it may be beneficial to operate at slightly lower water levels in the storage tank in order to circulate water in the storage facilities. Circulating water will often minimize freezing by keeping it in motion.

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WINTER-TIME PREPAREDNESS

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Fuel supplies for remote generators and heaters should also be on an inspection and filling schedule. Remember to treat diesel fuel supplies with a winter additive in order to prevent gelling.

Finally, update your contingency plan to make sure you have the current emergency contact information for staff, neighboring water systems, the local emergency management agency, and other people who may need to respond if you have an emergency this winter.

The following link is to U.S. EPA's Incident Action Checklist – Extreme Cold and Winter Storms <http://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse/access-incident-action-checklists-water-utilities>. The checklist outlines actions public water systems can take to prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme cold and winter storms.

The items in this article are just a few highlights to consider as you prepare your water system for the upcoming winter. An excellent resource for further information in creating a resilient strategy is located on U.S. EPA's Emergency/Incident Planning, Response and Recovery web page: <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/index.cfm>.

2016 SPRING		For more information Call the operator certification hotline at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728) or visit epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx
PAPER AND PENCIL EXAM DEADLINES AND DATES		
Wastewater: Feb. 3 - Application due May 3 - Exam	Water: Feb. 4 - Application due May 4 - Exam	

OHIO EPA eBUSINESS CENTER FOR OPERATORS

Ohio EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters (DDAGW) is now accepting electronic applications through Ohio EPA's eBusiness Center (<https://ebiz.epa.ohio.gov/>). The eBusiness Center is a secure portal for the regulated community and consultants to electronically complete and file Ohio EPA-related reports and permit applications. Operator exam, renewal, reciprocity, third-party certification and contact hour course approval applications can all be submitted through the eBusiness Center.

Using the eBusiness Center is currently optional for most Operator Certification program applications, such as operator renewal applications and payments. However, reciprocity and third-party certification applications are only being accepted through the eBusiness Center. Ohio EPA intends to eventually require all Operator Certification program applications and payments be submitted using the eBusiness Center. Starting in 2016, operator certification exam applications will only be accepted electronically. Deadlines for those exams are in early February 2016.

If you haven't done so already, use your Core Person ID number to set up your account. Your Core Person ID number is the middle seven digits of your operator certification number. If you do not have a valid certificate, you may still have a Core Person ID number. Please contact our office to inquire. A PIN will need to be requested for your account by submitting a notarized PIN request. Once you have established your account and PIN, you can renew by following the instructions on our website at epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx under the tab labeled "eBusiness Center."

For assistance, please contact the Ohio EPA Operator Certification Section, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728).



OHIO EPA PREPARES TO ADOPT THE FEDERAL REVISED TOTAL COLIFORM RULE

U.S. EPA finalized its revisions to the 1989 Total Coliform Rule, promulgating the Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) on Feb. 13, 2013. The purpose of the RTCR is to protect public health by reducing fecal pathogens through a combination of strategies. The strategies are to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment, to determine the integrity of the distribution system and to alert the public water system (PWS) to the presence of possible contamination. The new rule assists in meeting these goals by requiring PWSs to assess their systems and eliminate any defects present when monitoring results indicate they are vulnerable to contamination. U.S. EPA considers this approach more protective of human health because it offers a preventive methodology of finding and fixing problems that may impact human health.

Beginning April 1, 2016, all PWSs must comply with the requirements of the RTCR. Ohio EPA is in the process of revising and adopting these rules in Ohio Administrative Code Chapters 3745-81 and 3745-96. More information about Ohio EPA's implementation and guidance to PWSs will be made available over the coming months. In the interim, it is important to be aware of some of the major revisions to these rules, as listed in the following paragraphs.

The RTCR requires systems that experience coliform contamination within their distribution system to assess the problem and take corrective action to reduce exposure to potential fecal contamination and waterborne pathogens. PWSs are required to meet a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for *E. coli*, which is verified through monitoring. The frequency of microbial monitoring is based upon population served, system classification and source water type.

All public water systems will need to have bacteriological sample siting plans updated to meet RTCR criteria by the April 1, 2016 rule implementation date. Sample siting plans must include routine and repeat sample sites, and any sampling points necessary to meet the Ground Water Rule requirements.

The new rule replaces the total coliform MCL with a treatment technique "trigger" requiring a PWS to conduct an assessment of the system, as well as take corrective action. Although the treatment technique is not a violation, the presence of total coliforms serves to indicate that the system is vulnerable to contamination. A PWS that exceeds a specified frequency of total coliform occurrence must conduct an assessment to determine if a sanitary defect and/or significant deficiency exists, or whether an existing barrier has failed. If any sanitary defect and/or significant deficiency are found, the PWS must fix them within a specified time frame.

Community and larger, nontransient noncommunity PWSs will continue to perform monthly monitoring, but will not trigger increased monthly monitoring following a total coliform positive result. Instead, the MCL for total coliform will be eliminated and replaced with an MCL for *E. coli*. PWSs with total coliform positive samples may trigger an assessment to "find and fix" the cause of contamination. An *E. coli* MCL will trigger a more intensive assessment. The number of repeat samples following a positive routine

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... REVISED TOTAL COLIFORM RULE

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sample reduces from four to three and the repeats are to be collected within 24 hours of notification of the originating positive result. Extensions of the 24-hour limit may be granted due to extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to most of the items mentioned above for larger systems, there are additional changes that will affect small non-community PWSs. Small systems on quarterly total coliform monitoring can have an event (e.g., total coliform positive samples) that triggers increased monitoring to monthly. Quarterly monitoring systems will need to collect three instead of five routine samples the month following a positive routine result. The minimum monitoring for seasonal systems will be one sample each month the system serves water to the public. Seasonal PWSs will also be required to perform a start-up procedure that is documented before the start of each season and includes conducting total coliform sampling to show the water is free of microbial contamination. More information regarding Ohio EPA's progress in adopting the RTCR can be found on the Division of Drinking and Ground Water's "Rules, Laws, Policies and Guidance" web page, epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/rules.aspx. Please direct specific questions about this article or RTCR implementation to the following Ohio EPA, district office staff:

Central District Office: Bridgette Marchio, (614) 728-3870; Bridgette.Marchio@epa.ohio.gov

Northwest District Office: Linda Benham, (419) 373-4117; Linda.Benham@epa.ohio.gov or Laura Sullivan, (419) 373-3151; Laura.Sullivan@epa.ohio.gov

Northeast District Office: Pam Korenewych, (330) 963-1237; Pam.Korenewych@epa.ohio.gov

Southeast District Office: Russ Flagg, (740) 380-5229; Russell.Flagg@epa.ohio.gov

Southwest District Office: Mark Verbsky, (937) 285-6417; Mark.Verbsky@epa.ohio.gov

MAPPING AND EXERCISING VALVES—IT MATTERS!

Valves perform an important function within public water systems (PWS). Valves are necessary to ensure reliability of the distribution system to provide water without disruption by regulating the flow. Valves direct, start and stop the flow of water and are used to isolate areas within a distribution system in the event of minor disruptions of service or an emergency. Valves not regularly exercised will eventually malfunction. This failure is typically due to mechanical problems, corrosion or sediment deposition. Exercising valves increases the odds of PWSs minimizing the area affected by disruptions of service, such as line breaks, power outages, etc. For these reasons, developing and executing a valve exercising program is a necessity for all PWSs.

A valve exercising program consists of the following:

- Mapping the location of each valve.
- Exercising the valves per a set schedule.

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MAPPING AND EXERCISING ...

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- Performing needed repairs.
- Maintaining records of the activities.

Most disruptions of service are unplanned, so knowing the location and maintenance history of each valve provides the PWS with peace of mind they would otherwise not have.

The Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority has created a standard operating guideline for valve exercising and maintenance which is available at <http://www.acwajpia.com>. This guidance can help you get started with a valve exercising program for your water system.

If you are intimidated about creating a valve exercising program, talk to a fellow operator who has a program in place and ask how they got started.



RULE-MAKING ACTIVITIES

Below is a brief summary of recent and upcoming rule changes. For more details, including notice of opportunities to comment on draft rules, sign up for our electronic mailing list, or visit us on the web at epa.ohio.gov/ddagw.

Recently Adopted

- Backflow Prevention & Cross-Connection Control amendments in Chapter 3745-95 and additional rule amendments in Chapter 3745-91 and 3745-96 of the Administrative Code (effective Oct. 26, 2015)

Proposed Rules

- No Changes to Plan Approval rules in Chapter 3745-91 and Consumer Confidence Report rules in Chapter 3745-96 of the Administrative Code; filed with JCARR, Oct. 26, 2015; JCARR jurisdiction ends on Jan. 26, 2016

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Answer Place

Have questions?
Need help?
Click here to visit
the Answer Place.

DEAR ANSWER PLACE:

I am looking for more information on sealing an unused water well. Where do I find this information?

- Well-run-dry

DEAR WELL-RUN-DRY:

The Ohio Water Resources Council, State Coordinating Committee on Ground Water revised their document covering regulations and technical guidance for sealing unused water wells and boreholes in 2015. The document is available on The Division of Drinking and Ground Waters web site, on the rules, policies and guidance web page.

epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/rules.aspx

- Answer Place

HAVE A QUESTION FOR ANSWER PLACE?

Ask a question at <http://ohioepa.custhelp.com>

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OHIO EPA'S SPIGOT NEWS

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Drinking and Ground Waters

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RULE-MAKING ACTIVITIES

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Interested Party Review (IPR)

- Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR); second round IPR tentative Nov. 2015; propose to file, tentative early 2016
- Water Well Standards in Chapter 3745-9 and Plan Approval rules in Chapter 3745-91 of the Administrative Code; propose to file, tentative early 2016
- No Changes to Secondary Drinking Water Standards in Chapter 3745-82 and Emergency Loan rules in Chapter 3745-86 of the Administrative Code; IPR Oct. 27–Nov. 26, 2015; propose to file, tentative early 2016
- Harmful Algal Bloom New Rules and Laboratory Certification Amendments; IPR Sept. 22–Oct. 23, 2015; propose to file, Jan. 2016
- Underground Injection Control amendments in Chapter 3745-34 of the Administrative Code; second round of IPR Fall 2015; propose to file, tentative early 2016

In The Works

- 'No Changes' to Escrow Requirements for PWSs; IPR, early 2016
- Secondary Drinking Water Standards amendment; IPR, tentative early 2016
- Propose 2016-2018 DDAGW Rule-Making Plan, tentative early 2016
- Plan Approval rule amendment; IPR, tentative Spring 2016
- Contingency Plan Requirements for PWSs; IPR tentative Spring 2016

EARLY STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH (ESO)

Don't forget, early stakeholder outreach is the first step in Ohio EPA's rule-making process. It allows you to provide feedback as early as possible when Ohio EPA needs to amend, rescind or create rules, whether due to changes to state or federal law or a routine five-year review.

Why comment so early in the process?

The early stakeholder outreach phase is the only opportunity to shape the direction of rules before staff begins drafting language.

By sharing your comments early in the process, Ohio EPA can consider different concepts and ensure our rule development takes into account the effects the rules will have.

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