

Summer 2016  
Volume 9, Issue 1

## Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Rules Finalized, Effective June 1

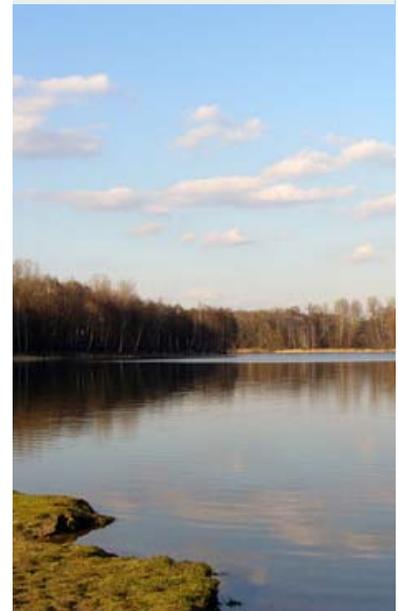
Ohio EPA has finalized rules for public water systems (PWS) and laboratories regarding harmful algal blooms (HAB) and cyanotoxins in drinking water. Ohio Senate Bill 1, passed in July 2015, directed Ohio EPA to protect against cyanobacteria in the western basin of Lake Erie and in public water supplies. High cyanobacteria levels in Lake Erie, as well as nearly 600 miles of the Ohio River and several inland lakes present a significant public health issue to Ohioans. In addition to safeguarding public health, the new rules provide a consistent and established response to cyanotoxin contamination in drinking water including timely public notification.

The HAB rules require all PWSs designated as surface water to sample weekly for total microcystins during the HAB season. Under the new rules in Chapter 3745-90 of the Ohio Administrative Code, each PWS will collect a set of samples weekly (raw and finished) for analysis at any state-certified laboratory. Every two weeks, PWSs will collect one raw water sample from each surface water source to be analyzed by Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental Services laboratory for other cyanobacteria screening. Ohio EPA has established shipping hubs to facilitate this bi-weekly sampling requirement. Shipment of cyanobacteria screening samples from the regional hubs will be paid by the State of Ohio in 2016. Bi-weekly samples are required to be collected at the same time as ongoing weekly samples. The results of the cyanobacteria screening samples (bi-weekly) will be used to determine if monitoring for cyanotoxins, other than microcystins, needs to be conducted by Ohio EPA or voluntarily by the PWS. The response to cyanobacteria screening results will be outlined in Ohio's 2016 Public Water System Response Strategy.

The HAB rules require increased monitoring if microcystins are detected in finished water. Sampling increases to daily (raw and finished) until two

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**FALL 2016  
PAPER AND PENCIL  
EXAM DEADLINES  
AND DATES**

Wastewater

Aug. 11  
*Application Due*

Nov. 9  
*Exam Date*

Water

Aug. 12  
*Application Due*

Nov. 10  
*Exam Date*

Call the operator certification hotline at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728) or visit [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx) for more information.



## HAB RULES FINALIZED

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consecutive samples and all distribution samples are non-detect for total microcystins. Responses based on action level exceedances, as well as guidance for notification of consecutive PWSs, are outlined in the new rules. Increased monitoring requirements will be triggered if total microcystins exceed 5.0 µg/L in raw water: sampling increases to three times per week at both the raw water and finished water tap. (Monitoring requirements for total microcystins can be reduced under certain conditions at the approval of the Director of Ohio EPA.)

During a microcystins bloom, PWSs are expected to optimize existing treatment processes. Effective changes to treatment include but are not limited to, increasing PAC (powdered activated carbon) feed, if possible; reducing or eliminating pre-oxidation; and increasing settling basin sludge removal. Total microcystins includes both cellular and extracellular toxins. Extracellular toxins have been released from dead algal cells and cannot be removed by settling and/or filtration. Adequate chlorine contact time and concentration is the standard treatment for extracellular toxin. Additional treatment optimization guidance is available at [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/HAB.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/HAB.aspx). Treatment optimization protocols must be submitted to Ohio EPA when microcystins are detected in the finished water or raw water. Any added treatment for microcystins removal, as well as the development of a new raw water source or emergency connection, must receive prior approval from the agency.

For more information, visit [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/HAB.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/HAB.aspx) or contact Ohio EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters at (614) 644-2752.

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## HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM SEASON UPDATE

The harmful algal bloom (HAB) season is well on its way and Ohio EPA is prepared to provide assistance to PWSs. The Agency will release PWS guidance on treatment optimization protocols, which will cover reservoir management, treatment plant optimization and establishing triggers for optimization based on raw and finished water monitoring. Also, new HAB rules will be effective in June 2016. In addition, the 2016 updated version of Ohio EPA's HAB Response Strategy will be released. Lastly, an electronic mailing list for HAB Updates for PWSs is now available. To subscribe to this electronic mailing list, please visit <http://ohioepa.custhelp.com/ci/documents/detail/2/subscriptionpage> and select "Yes" for the option "Harmful Algal Blooms: Updates for public water systems and laboratories."

For questions about this update or HAB-related inquiries, please contact the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters at (614) 644-2752.

## SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OWNER AND OPERATOR OF RECORD

Providing a safe and reliable source of drinking water to consumers is the responsibility of both Ohio EPA and the public water system (PWS). Each play different roles: Ohio EPA regulates and provides technical assistance to systems, while the PWS owner and the Operator of Record are responsible for knowing the regulatory requirements, understanding the water system and providing an appropriate level of operation and maintenance to the facility. Operators of Record must have a comprehensive knowledge of the water source, treatment system operation, maintenance that has taken place or is needed at the system and must maintain detailed operational and maintenance records. The Operator of Record is responsible for meeting daily operational needs and troubleshooting during an emergency. This is true for both small and large systems.

Operators of Record of small PWSs often indicate they simply collect samples and check to make sure the well pump is working. However, a small system Operator of Record plays a substantial and vital role in the multi-tiered line of defense it takes to provide safe drinking water to the public. If you are an Operator of Record of a small water system, consider the following questions. The list is not a comprehensive list, however, if your answer to any of these questions is a “no” or “I don’t know,” be sure to review the necessary information so you are aware should a public health emergency occur at the PWS for which you are responsible:

- Do I regularly and thoroughly inspect the integrity of the well(s) and the area around the well for potential sources of contamination?
- When was maintenance last completed on the well, well pump, pressure tank, treatment unit, chemical pump, clearwell, etc.? Is the last maintenance date for that piece of equipment in line with the manufacturer’s specifications? Are my maintenance records accurate, authentic and accessible?
- Do I regularly test individual treatment units to determine if they are working optimally and appropriately?
- Have I reviewed water analyses that I have taken over a period of time to determine if there are any changes occurring in the water quality?
- Have I reviewed meter readings taken over a period of time to determine if there is any significant water loss?
- Can I prove that I’m providing the minimum amount of oversight of my PWS (per Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3745-7)? Is the required minimum staffing time enough to fix problems at my PWS?

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### SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS...

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- Do I have access to a copy of the approved engineering plans for my water system?
- Do I have a copy of the monitoring schedule for my water system? Is it in a location where it can be easily accessed by others, should the need arise?
- Is my contingency plan in a place where everyone can access it, if needed? Is it thorough and up-to-date in case of a public health emergency (per Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3745-85)?
- If there is an emergency, do I know who I am supposed to notify [Ohio Administrative Code rule 3745-7-09 paragraph (C)]?
- If there is an emergency, what assets are available to fix the problem as soon as possible?
- What should I do if the owner of the water system prevents me from completing necessary responsibilities [Ohio Administrative Code rule 3745-7-09 paragraph (D)]?

Have questions about your role as an owner or Operator of Record? Your district office, DDAGW environmental specialist or the Operator Certification Unit can help. Visit the district office website at [epa.ohio.gov/districts.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/districts.aspx) or call (614) 644-2752.

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### OHIO EPA eBUSINESS CENTER FOR OPERATORS

All exam applications must now be submitted through Ohio EPA's eBusiness Center. Operators are encouraged to visit the Operator Certification website at [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx) for instructions and information regarding the registration and use of the operator service in the eBusiness Center.

Operators can also renew their certificates using the eBusiness Center. Beginning August 1 of an operator's renewal year, the operator will be able to click on the renewal icon next to their expiring certificate and begin to choose contact hour courses to assign to their renewal. Course attendance that has been uploaded by training providers will appear at this time. Instructions for renewal can be found under the eBusiness tab on the Operator Certification website.

As of April 1, 2016 the Ohio EPA Operator Certification Unit no longer accepts paper Contact Hour Course Applications. All applications for contact hour course approval must be submitted through the eBusiness Center. In the spring of 2015, letters were mailed to all active training providers with instructions for the use of the training provider service in the eBusiness Center. A follow-up letter was mailed in February to those providers that had not updated their account information. If you are a training provider with valid contact hour courses, and are not yet using your eBusiness Center account, please contact the Operator Certification Unit at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728) or [opcert@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:opcert@epa.ohio.gov).

## LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

### Plan Ahead: Sample Early

Planning ahead is important, especially because of unforeseen circumstances which may affect a public water system (PWS). Part of the planning for a PWS owner and operator includes becoming familiar with all sampling requirements, as well as sampling early in the scheduled monitoring period. The PWS could face difficulties if samples are collected late in the monitoring period.

Recent examples of PWSs collecting samples late during the scheduled monitoring period resulted in violations for both and a monetary penalty for one of the systems. In one instance, the laboratory's quality control failed, the sample was invalidated, and there was no additional time to collect a new

sample. The other PWS waited until the very end of the monitoring period to collect their sample, the laboratory failed to analyze it on time, and there was no additional time to collect a new one.

In addition to monitoring violations and monetary penalties, sampling early in the scheduled monitoring period affords a PWS owner and operator time to assess the quality of the drinking water supply and determine if there are potential impacts to consumers. Monitoring schedules can be viewed online at [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/pws.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/pws.aspx) (2016 List by County).

If you have questions about your monitoring schedule, please contact your Ohio EPA district office. [epa.ohio.gov/districts.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/districts.aspx)



## RULEMAKING 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](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw).

### *Recently Adopted*

- Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) (effective April 1, 2016)
- Harmful Algal Bloom New Rules and Laboratory Certification Amendments (effective June 1, 2016)
- Water Well Standards in Chapter 3745-9 and Plan Approval rules in Chapter 3745-91 of the Administrative Code (effective June 13, 2016)

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### Answer Place

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

#### DEAR ANSWER PLACE:

How often do I need to fill out an operator of record notification form?

- Operator Bob

#### DEAR OPERATOR BOB:

This notification form should be submitted to Ohio EPA whenever the Operator of Record (ORC) changes (addition, replacement or removal of an ORC) at a public water system. Fill out all of the boxes on the form. Signatures are required from both the owner and operator unless the ORC is being removed. Only one of those signatures is required for removal. The form is available on the web at [epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/pws.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/pws.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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## RULEMAKING ACTIVITIES

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### *Proposed Rules*

- Monitoring for Compliance with Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels, proposed May 5, 2016

### *Interested Party Review (IPR)*

- Underground Injection Control, rules to be filed with no changes; propose to file, tentative Summer 2016
- Iron and Manganese Treatment, Minor Revisions; propose to file, tentative Summer 2016

### *In the Works*

- Underground Injection Control, rules to be filed with minor amendments; IPR tentative Summer 2016
- Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, incorporating House Bill 512; IPR tentative Fall 2016
- Contingency Plan Requirements for PWSs; IPR tentative Summer 2016
- Operator Certification Amendments and New Rule; IPR, tentative Fall 2016
- Capability Assurance Plans in Chapter 3745-87, amendments or no changes; IPR, tentative Fall 2016
- Requirements for Yard Hydrants in Chapter 3745-95, amendments or no changes; IPR, tentative Fall 2016

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- Resiliency and Water Security: Emergency Management Information for Public Works
- Harmful Algal Blooms Mailing List: Updates for Public Water Systems and Laboratories
- DDAGW Spigot News: Newsletter for Public Drinking Water Systems
- Drinking Water: Rulemaking Activity and Policy Notification
- Monitoring and Compliance Information
- Underground Injection Control: Rulemaking Activity and Program Notification
- Operator Certification Program: Drinking Water and Wastewater
- Electronic Reporting: Lab Reporting or Water System Reporting