

Water Supply Rules Amendments Adopted

In April, a revised state water supply rule took effect. The original rule was a hefty one, so it is a relief to know that the revised rule does not constitute a complete rewrite. Nonetheless, there are parts of the revised rule, noted below, that will have an impact on municipalities.

- Requirements to notify the Water Supply Division immediately if a water system is broken into or threatened.
- Limits on uses of emergency sources.
- Amendments to the section regulating laboratories that may be used for maximum contaminant level (MCL) sampling required of public water systems.
- Makes radionuclide standard consistent with federal standards; federal standards adopted by reference.
- Adds requirements for continuous disinfection for non-transient, noncommunity systems.
- Provides for a “composite correction program” and allows public water systems to eliminate cross connections.
- Adds requirements for sewer line construction standards in source protection areas when the same entity owns both the water system and sewer lines.

It is worth remembering the different kinds of water systems, according to the rule. A **public water system** serves 15 or more connections or 25 or more individuals. A **public community water system** serves residents year-round. Most municipally-owned systems are public community water systems. A **public non-community system** serves non-residential groups of people such as schools (which would be **public non-transient non-community systems** because they serve a regularly present population) and restaurants (**public transient non-community** because they serve users who change over time).

The new rule requires that all laboratories that analyze samples submitted by public water systems be certified by the Department of Health and subject to federal certification standards. The option of using a laboratory “acceptable to the Secretary” [of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)] is eliminated.

A water supplier shall now notify local law enforcement officials and the ANR Secretary immediately upon discovering a threat to water quality or quantity due to “vandalism, tampering, verbal or written threat or sabotage.”

These are just a few of the changes. Copies of the rule and a table directing readers to all changes may be downloaded from the Water Supply Division’s Web site, www.vermontdrinkingwater.org. To obtain a hard copy, phone the Division at 802/241-3400.

- Karen Horn, Director, VLCT Legislative and Membership Services

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