

MONTANA'S 2021 Annual Public Water System Compliance Report

The Drinking Water Program: An Overview

The EPA established the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Program under the authority of the 1974 Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Under the SDWA and the 1986 Amendments, EPA sets national limits on contaminant levels in drinking water to ensure that the water is safe for human consumption. These limits are known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) and the Maximum Residual Disinfectant Levels (MRDLs). For some regulations, EPA establishes treatment techniques in lieu of an MCL to control unacceptable levels of contaminants in water. The Agency also regulates how often public water systems (PWSs) monitor their water for contaminants and report the monitoring results to the states or EPA. Generally, the larger the population served by a water system, the more frequent the monitoring and reporting (M/R) requirements. In addition, EPA requires PWSs to monitor for unregulated contaminants to provide data for future regulatory development. Finally, EPA requires PWSs to notify their consumers when they have violated these regulations. The 1996 Amendments to the SDWA require consumer notification to include a clear and understandable explanation of the nature of the violation, its potential adverse health effects, steps that the PWS is undertaking to correct the violation, and the possibility of alternative water supplies during the violation.

The SDWA applies to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Indian Lands, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The SDWA allows states and territories to seek EPA approval to administer their own PWSS Programs. The authority to run a PWSS Program is called primacy. For a state to receive primacy, EPA must determine that the state meets certain requirements laid out in the SDWA and the regulations, including the adoption of drinking water regulations that are at least as stringent as the Federal regulations and a demonstration that they can enforce the program requirements. Of the 56 states and territories, all but Wyoming and the District of Columbia have primacy. The EPA Regional Offices administer the PWSS Programs within these two jurisdictions.

The 1986 SDWA Amendments gave Indian Tribes the right to apply for and receive primacy. EPA currently administers PWSS Programs on all Indian lands except the Navaho Nation, which was granted primacy in late 2000.

Public Water System

A "Public water supply system" means a system for the provision of water for human consumption from a community well, water hauler for cisterns, water bottling

plant, water dispenser, or other water supply that has at least 15 service connections or that regularly serves at least 25 persons daily for any 60 or more days in a calendar year. There are three types of PWSs. PWSs can be community (such as towns), nontransient noncommunity (such as schools or factories), or transient noncommunity systems (such as rest stops or parks). For this report, when the acronym “PWS” is used it means systems of all types unless specified in greater detail.

Maximum Contaminant Level

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the EPA sets national limits on contaminant levels in drinking water to ensure that the water is safe for human consumption. These limits are known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs).

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level

The EPA sets national limits on residual disinfectant levels in drinking water to reduce the risk of exposure to disinfectant byproducts formed, when public water systems add chemical disinfectant for either primary or residual treatment. These limits are known as Maximum Residual Disinfectant Levels (MRDLs).

Treatment Techniques

For some regulations, the EPA establishes treatment techniques (TTs) in lieu of an MCL to control unacceptable levels of certain contaminants. For example, treatment techniques have been established for viruses, some bacteria, and turbidity.

Monitoring and Reporting

A PWS is required to monitor and verify that the levels of contaminants present in the water do not exceed the MCL. If a PWS fails to have its water tested as required or fails to report test results correctly to the primacy agent, a monitoring and/or reporting violation occurs.

Significant Monitoring and Reporting Violations

For this report, significant monitoring violations are generally defined as any significant monitoring violation that occurred during the calendar year of the report. A significant monitoring violation, with rare exceptions, occurs when no samples were taken, or no results were reported during a compliance period.

Consumer Notification

Every Community Water System is required to deliver to its customers a brief annual water quality report. This report is to include some educational material, and will provide information on the source water, the levels of any detected contaminants, and compliance with drinking water regulations.

Significant Consumer Notification Violations

For this report, a significant consumer notification violation occurred if a community water system completely failed to provide its customers the required annual water quality report.

Significant Public Notification Violations

For this report, significant public notification violation occurs when a PWS completely fails to notify its consumers that the PWS violated a national primary drinking water regulation or had a situation posing a risk to public health.

Annual State PWS Report

Each quarter, primacy states submit data to the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS/FED), an automated database maintained by EPA. The data submitted include, but are not limited to, PWS inventory information, the incidence of Maximum Contaminant Level, Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level, monitoring, and treatment technique violations; and information on enforcement activity related to these violations. Section 1414(c)(3)(A) of the Safe Drinking Water Act requires states to provide EPA with an annual report of violations of the primary drinking water standards. This report covers the period of January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and provides the numbers of violations in each of six categories: MCLs, MRDLs, treatment techniques, variances and exemptions, significant monitoring violations, and significant consumer notification violations. Montana's inventory of public water supplies varies in number but currently includes 764 community systems, 1161 transient non-community systems, and 297 non-transient non-community systems. The EPA Regional Offices report the information for Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and all Indian Lands but the Navaho Nation. EPA Regional offices also report Federal enforcement actions taken. Data retrieved from SDWIS/FED form the basis of this report.

OBTAINING A COPY OF THE 2021 PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS REPORT

As required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, the State of Montana has made the 2021 Public Water Systems report available to the public. Interested individuals can obtain a copy of the 2021 Annual Public Water Systems Report for Montana by accessing:

State Website: <https://deq.mt.gov/files/Water/PWSUB/Documents/2021MTACR.pdf>

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Description of Report

The attached report is broken down by rule into two types of violations, MCL (maximum contaminant level) and monitoring. Each violation type lists three categories, “# of Violations”, “# of return to compliance (RTC) Violations”, and “# of PWS in Violation”.

The following is a description of each:

of Violations, this describes the total number of violations created for each regulated contaminant. Since violations are associated with sample point locations, it is possible for one system to have more than one violation for the same contaminant.

of RTC Violations, RTC violations are violations that were created, but that have since been returned to compliance.

of PWS in Violation, this indicates the number of systems that are responsible for the total number of violations listed for each rule. Thus, there may be more total violations than total systems.

Violation Category	Rule Group	Rule Name	# of Violations	# of RTC Violations	# of PWS in Violation
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Chemicals	Arsenic	4	0	1
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Chemicals	Nitrates	14	0	7
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Chemicals	Radionuclides	7	0	1
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	12	5	5
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Microbials	Revised Total Coliform Rule	6	6	6
TOTAL MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL VIOLATION			43	11	20

Violation Category	Rule Group	Rule Name	# of Violations	# of RTC Violations	# of PWS in Violation
Monitoring Violation	Microbials	Revised Total Coliform Rule	529	390	296
TOTAL MONITORING VIOLATION			529	390	296
Violation Category	Rule Group	Rule Name	# of Violations	# of RTC Violations	# of PWS in Violation
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Arsenic	2	2	2
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Inorganic Chemicals	4	2	4
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Lead and Copper Rule	220	149	189
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Nitrates	124	74	123
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Radionuclides	8	8	4
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Synthetic Organic Chemicals	300	300	11
Monitoring and Reporting	Chemicals	Volatile Organic Chemicals	211	126	11
Monitoring and Reporting	Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	4	1	4
Monitoring and Reporting	Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule	50	16	26
Monitoring and Reporting	Microbials	Ground Water Rule	101	76	72
TOTAL MONITORING AND REPORTING			1024	754	446

Violation Category	Rule Group	Rule Name	# of Violations	# of RTC Violations	# of PWS in Violation
Other Violation	Microbials	Ground Water Rule	1	1	1
Other Violation	Microbials	Revised Total Coliform Rule	26	2	26
Other Violation	Other	Consumer Confidence Rule	135	74	112
TOTAL OTHER VIOLATION			162	77	139

Violation Category	Rule Group	Rule Name	# of Violations	# of RTC Violations	# of PWS in Violation
Treatment Technique Violation	Chemicals	Lead and Copper Rule	3	1	3
Treatment Technique Violation	Microbials	Ground Water Rule	16	13	15
Treatment Technique Violation	Microbials	Long Term 1 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule	1	0	1
Treatment Technique Violation	Microbials	Revised Total Coliform Rule	38	23	37
Treatment Technique Violation	Microbials	Surface Water Treatment Rule	7	1	7
TOTAL OTHER VIOLATION			65	38	63