



JULY 2023

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1 Notable Dates

- Consolidation Grant Cycle: August 1
- ERWOW Fall Conference: August 29-31
- PFAS Forum: September 19-20.

Connections

- [The Office of Drinking Water Newsletter](#)
- [SIGN UP](#) to get this in your inbox!
- [Find Your Regional Offices and Staff](#)
- [Drinking Water Home Page](#)

Quad Cities Columbia River Cyanotoxin Monitoring

The Cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland will continue their Columbia River cyanotoxin monitoring activities during the

2023 algal bloom season. The project began in 2021 following animal deaths linked to anatoxin-a in the river. Cyanotoxins were again detected in the river last fall and the City of Richland successfully demonstrated use of potassium permanganate to bring finished water anatoxin-a levels below the detection limit.

The four utilities are collaborating with ODW, the Benton-Franklin Health District, and the King County Environmental lab to test each surface water intake for microcystins and anatoxin-a throughout the May-November bloom season. Fortunately, there have been no cyanotoxin detections so far this year. The cities of Kennewick and Richland continue to collect increased water quality data from their two river intakes, including chlorophyll, phycocyanin, pH, temperature, conductivity, and turbidity.

Cyanotoxins are an emerging, unregulated contaminant linked to climate change. We expect the number of systems facing this issue to increase—all systems with a surface source should start planning now. Our guidance publication [Dealing with Cyanobacteria: Time to Make a Plan 331-654 \(PDF\)](#) has tools to help you.

- ◆ Evaluate your existing treatment processes-how well could your treatment plant weather a cyanotoxin event? What treatment adjustments can you make? Do you have an alternative source?
- ◆ Engage your decisions makers-what resources do you need? How will you keep your customers informed?
- ◆ Line up laboratory capability-how many samples will you need and how quickly can you get sample results during an emergency?
- ◆ Develop a robust communication plan to maintain credibility with your customers and ensure you can "Be first. Be right. Be credible".

You can find more resources on our [Harmful Algal Bloom Toolkit webpage](#). 💧





IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Use of Household Bleach for Water System Disinfection

All public water systems are required to only use treatment chemicals that comply with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard 60/National Science Foundation (NSF) Standard 60. The only exception to this critically important public health requirement is the use of commercially retailed hypochlorite compounds that have **NO additives**. This means sodium hypochlorite that has **no scents, no perfumes, no detergents, no polymers, no anything**. Our sanitary surveyors found small water systems using Clorox Performance with Cloromax currently available at Costco. These product additives make it unsuitable for drinking water. Do not use this for your drinking water system!

The safest alternative is an ANSI/NSF certified product. If you have questions about the hypochlorite product that you are using, contact your [regional engineer](#). 💧

Congratulations to our 2022 TOP Performers!

We expect water systems to meet clean drinking water standards for surface water treatment. Turbidity optimization is direct filtration of surface water to remove particulates and microbes from surface water sources such as lakes and rivers. Customers of these systems can trust that the water coming out of their taps is reliably clean and safe.

Turbidity monitoring data for 2022 show that Washington's conventional and direct filtration surface water treatment plants continue to perform above national regulatory standards—and provide better public health protection.

Four systems are continuing their run of excellence and have now reached 22 consecutive years of optimization!

We also award bronze, silver, gold, and platinum certificates to systems the first time they meet the turbidity goals for 3, 5, 10, and 15 consecutive years, respectively. This year, one system earned a gold award and four systems earned a bronze award.

Congratulations to the treatment plant operators, utility managers, and decision makers for making this happen!

See the winners and read more about turbidity optimization on our [Rapid Rate Filtration Plants webpage](#). 💧



ATTENTION: WE NEED YOU AT THE DRINKING WATER ADVISORY GROUP!

Ten years ago we started DWAG because we want to hear from you, our partners in the drinking water industry. We want to learn what challenges you face daily in operations.

If you don't attend DWAG, please consider doing so. You may miss out on important conversations! Plus, you can attend from the comfort of your own office, vehicle, or

lunchroom. We use Teams to meet virtually, and post the meeting link and agenda on our [DWAG Meetings webpage](#).

We've increased the number of meetings this summer to focus on specific topics related to policy work from EPA and the legislature. 💧

We Have Money!

Funding cycles for the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#) are coming up. **We will accept applications for the Consolidation Feasibility Study Grant August 1 through August 31, 2023.** Who's eligible to apply for funding:

- ◆ Group A community not-for-profits.
- ◆ Municipalities.
- ◆ Water districts.
- ◆ Public utility districts.

We will use the [2022 Consolidation Loan Guidelines 331-196 \(PDF\)](#). Consolidation or restructuring of Group A, Group B, or private wells. Group B or private wells must join or create a Group A water system if consolidation or restructuring is completed. What's eligible for funding:

- ◆ Feasibility studies.
- ◆ Water system plans.
- ◆ Small water system management programs.
- ◆ Engineering designs.
- ◆ Connection fees.

Then we move into the **Construction Loan application cycle October 2 through November 30, 2023.** Eligible applicants are:

- ◆ Group A community water systems with public or private ownership.
- ◆ Group A not-for-profit non-community water systems.

If you are a for-profit community water system, contact Michael.Copeland@doh.wa.gov to confirm eligibility.

Besides traditional funding for water infrastructure, **there will be specific pots of funding for emerging contaminants and Lead Service Lines (LSL).** Emerging contaminant funding will prioritize PFAS that exceeds state action levels in drinking water. If funding is available, we

will fund projects that address cyanobacteria and manganese above the EPA Health Advisory of 0.3 milligrams per liter. **We will offer LSL funding again.** It can pay for service line inventory development, including paying for staff dedicated to creating the inventories or for LSL replacement. If you have replaced the public service line in the past five years, you may use the loan to replace the private service line from the meter to the building. See the [March 2023 Lead Service Line Loan Guidelines 331-714 \(PDF\)](#) for more information about the funding.

There is potential for up to 100 percent loan principal forgiveness and loan fee waiver for disadvantaged communities. The Emerging Contaminant funding is 100 percent loan principal forgiveness regardless of water system size or ownership. Of the \$17 million available, 25 percent must go to small systems serving less than 25,000 people or water systems identified as a disadvantaged community.

For the LSL Loan funding, 49 percent of what we award must go to disadvantaged community water systems. We have \$23 million available for the LSL loans. The more applicants who qualify as disadvantaged, the more money we can award for the Construction Loan, Emerging Contaminant funding, and the Lead Service Line Loan.

Provide feedback on the proposed disadvantaged community definition. We will use feedback from this summer to develop an emergency rule definition for this year's Construction Loan cycle. Formal rulemaking comment period will be mid-2024. See the [Rulemaking webpage](#) for more information. ◆



NRDC Releases Water Utility Affordability Tool

This month, the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) released a new and free tool that addresses bill affordability for low-income water and wastewater utility customers. The [Water Affordability Business Case Tool](#) allows utilities to model financial impacts of discount programs for low-income customers.

The Tool analyzes the following discount programs:

- ◆ Percentage of Income Program (PIP)—bills are capped at a percentage of income deemed affordable by the user;
- ◆ Percentage of Bill (POB)—bills are set equal to a percentage discount from the total bill at standard rates; and
- ◆ Fixed Dollar Discount (FDD) program, in which each participating household receives a set dollar-amount discount on its bill.

Users can select from various program design options and also analyze results using a range of participation rates by eligible customers, program administrative costs, and other factors. [Learn more about the affordability tool.](#) ◆

We're Electric!

We now conduct all business electronically. To ensure we receive your correspondence, reports, forms, submittals, and any other information you are trying to get to us, please send it to us by email (under 25 mb) or you can request a [Box.com](#) folder through our administrative staff. [Box.com](#) allows you to easily transfer very large files. Below are instructions and email addresses to help you navigate this change.

- ◆ Review and or update your Water Facilities Inventory (WFI) form for contact information and valid email addresses for owner and primary contacts.
 - [Instructions for Completing the WFI 331-621 \(PDF\)](#).
- ◆ Make online payments for operating permits, engineering and planning review fees, and sanitary survey inspections.
 - [Online Payment Guide 331-688 \(PDF\)](#).

Submitting documents is as easy as sending an email. Email addresses for each region are below.

Eastern Regional Office

- ◆ Admin eroadmin@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Chlorination and Nitrate DOHDWChlorination@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Consumer Confidence Reports CCR.ERO@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Engineering and Planning eroadmin@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Ownership/Operational Changes wfi.ero@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Sanitary Surveys ero.SanitarySurveys@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Surface Water Treatment Reports ero.SW.Treatment.Reports@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Water Quality ero.Waterquality@doh.wa.gov

Northwest Regional Office

- ◆ Admin DW.nwro.wsprojects@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Chlorination and Nitrate DW.NWRO@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Consumer Confidence Reports CCR.NWRO@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Engineering and Planning submittals DW.nwro.wsprojects@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Ownership/Operational Changes WFI.NWRO@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Sanitary Surveys NWRO.SanitarySurveys@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Surface Water Treatment Reports DW.NWRO@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Coliform water quality and seasonal startup documentation nwro.coli@doh.wa.gov

Southwest Regional Office

- ◆ Admin swro.admin@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Chlorination/Disinfection Reports sw.treatment.reports@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Consumer Confidence Reports swro@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Complaints complaints@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Engineering and Planning Submittals swro.admin@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Ownership/Operational Changes wfi.swro@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Sanitary Surveys swro.sanitarysurveys@doh.wa.gov
- ◆ Surface Water Treatment Reports swtr.swro@doh.wa.gov

If you have questions about your water system or a possible project, we encourage you to contact your regional engineer or planner for technical assistance or a pre-submittal meeting. ◆

New Fluoride Notification Rule

During the 2023 Legislative Session, HB1251 passed resulting in new notification requirements for public water systems. Beginning July 23, 2023, water systems that add fluoride to their drinking water must provide notification to customers and us 90 days in advance before discontinuing fluoridation. This does not include temporary interruptions of fluoridation. For systems considering adding fluoride to their drinking water, they must notify customers and us 90 days in advance of fluoridating the water supply.

Acceptable forms of notification to customers include radio, television, newspaper, mail, electronic notices, or any combination of methods that most successfully tell customers about the change. Systems that fail to meet the new notification requirements must return to and continue to provide fluoridation until they meet the notification requirements.

For more information please refer to our [Fluoridation of Drinking Water webpage](#). ◆



Cybersecurity and Your Water System

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and our Office of Drinking Water (ODW) recognize that cybersecurity is an important issue for many water systems. Below is information about some simple account security steps you can take to protect your system. In addition, we include information about a recent EPA memorandum outlining requirements for water systems and state administrators.

Your system may be a target of malicious cyber activity if you have “operational technology” to support the operations of your water system. “Operational technology” means hardware and software that detects or causes a change through the direct monitoring or control of physical devices, processes, and events in your water system. This includes supervisory control and data acquisition systems (SCADA) as well as other smaller control systems using programmable logic controllers to control localized processes.

Here a few simple steps, you can take to protect your system from malicious cyber activity.

- ◆ **Block repeated unsuccessful login attempts.** After a specific number of consecutive, unsuccessful login attempts in a short amount of time, the system administrator should be notified and future login attempts by the suspicious account should be blocked for a specified time or until re-enabled by an administrator.
- ◆ **Change default passwords.** Change all default manufacturer or vendor passwords before equipment or software is put in place, when feasible.
- ◆ **Immediately disable access to an account or network due to change in staffing,** including retirements, change in roles, termination, or other factors. Take all steps necessary to terminate access to accounts and networks immediately upon the individual's change in employment status.
- ◆ **Have separate user and privileged accounts.** Restrict System Administrators' privileges to a separate user

account for administrative actions only. Evaluate privileges routinely and assess if they are still needed by these individuals.

- ◆ **Require unique and separate credentials for users to access operating technology (OT) and information technology (IT) networks.** Require a single user to have two different usernames and passwords. One set is used to access the IT network; the other set is used to access the OT network. This reduces risk of an attacker being able to move between both networks using a single login.
- ◆ **Backup systems necessary for operations** (e.g., network configurations, PLC logic, engineering drawings, personnel records) on a regular schedule. Maintain or store securely and separately backups of critical OT and IT systems. Test backups on a regular basis.

In March 2023, [EPA released a memo](#) that stressed the importance of cybersecurity and outlined requirements for states and water systems. In the memo, EPA clarified that state drinking water programs, like ODW, must evaluate the cybersecurity of operational technology used by public water systems during sanitary surveys or through another state program. Currently, we do not have a program to evaluate water systems' cybersecurity, but we are beginning the process to develop options for water systems in our state to meet the requirements.

At this time, we are in the first steps of developing a program and outlining options. We will communicate our work with you through articles like this one, posting information on our website, and presenting information at meetings, such as our [Drinking Water Advisory Group meetings](#). In addition, EPA and [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) (CISA) have lots of information and suggestions on their websites for water and wastewater systems. 💧

December 31, 2024, Will Be Here Before You Know It

Most certified waterworks operators just passed the half-way point of their professional growth cycle. Operators must earn 3.0 CEU each three-year cycle to be eligible to renew their certifications. Only 760 of our nearly 3,400 operators in this cycle have met their professional growth requirement. That leaves a lot of folks with work to do. Don't be the operator that can't find relevant training in the last few months of the cycle.

Visit [Washington Certification Services' webpage](#) to:

- ◆ Check your professional growth status.
- ◆ Print your certification validation card.
- ◆ Update your contact information.
- ◆ View approved training in Washington.

Many trainers list their courses on the [WaterOperator.org](#) calendar for easy “one stop shopping.” While you're there, sign up for a newsletter or search their expansive resource library. 💧

Singing Those DBP Blues

Disinfection byproducts (DBPs) are an ongoing issue for some water systems in Washington State. As we enter the warmest time of year, DBPs are often at their peak in distribution systems. The most reliable way to handle DBPs is to install treatment that removes dissolved organic matter (DOC) from source water.

For some systems it is possible to control DBP levels through distribution system operational changes. Water systems may be able to reduce the amount of DBPs formed by using one or more of the following methods.

- ◆ Remove or reduce organic substances that react with chlorine to produce DBPs.
- ◆ Reduce the contact time and/or the concentration of chlorine in the distribution system.
- ◆ Ensure adequate turnover in storage tanks and eliminate areas of stagnant water.
- ◆ Reduce the "water age" (the length of time water is in the distribution system).

- ◆ Change the location where you add chlorine or add booster chlorination.
- ◆ Use a different type of disinfectant.

To decide the best approach, more water quality data is helpful. We are working with some water systems that have DBP exceedances to gather more data. We asked them to sample for DOC, total organic carbon (TOC), ammonia, UV254, pH, temperature, chloride, and bromide. We also developed a DBP Mitigation Field Data Sheet that summarizes water system operations related to DBP formation. If you struggle with DBPs and are interested in learning more about our data collection recommendations please [contact your regional office](#).

For more information on DBPs see our publications online.

- ◆ [Disinfection Byproducts: Chlorination of Drinking Water 331-251 \(PDF\)](#).
- ◆ [Regulating Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts 331-254 \(PDF\)](#). ◆

Drought Update

In April 2023, snowpack and streamflow projections were near average across the state. May temperatures, however, were tied for the highest on record and resulted in melting approximately half of the snowpack. In some areas of the state snowpack melted out four weeks earlier than normal. Additionally, streamflow projections dropped to below normal across the state for the remainder of the summer months. May and June precipitation has been lower than normal across the state and the three-month forecast for Washington is indicating a higher chance of above normal temperatures with near-normal amounts of precipitation.

These factors led Ecology to convene the Executive Water Emergency Committee (EWEC) on June 28 to evaluate conditions and determine if a drought emergency or advisory is appropriate. EWEC is composed of state agency leaders with a stake in water supplies. These leaders assess findings from Water Supply Availability Committee and can recommend the governor consider a drought advisory or an emergency drought declaration.

A drought advisory may be issued ahead of a drought emergency when it appears that drought conditions may develop. Drought advisories seek to increase awareness and readiness of affected water users. They are informational only and include no emergency authorizations or funding.

Ecology may declare a drought emergency statewide or for a limited geographic area, like a watershed or county. A drought emergency means the water supply is projected to

be below 75 percent of average, and there is a risk of undue hardship to water users. It authorizes Ecology to process expedited requests for emergency water right permits. Emergency relief funding is also available. Most recently, the state declared drought emergencies in 2015, 2019, and 2021.

At the June 28 meeting, EWEC members voted to recommend a drought advisory declaration for the entire state and the committee re-convene in mid-July. At that time, EWEC will hear revised projections on the water supply and determine if a drought emergency is appropriate and in what regions of the state. When a drought emergency is declared, Ecology is authorized to provide funding to public entities to implement projects and measures that alleviate undue hardship caused by drought conditions negatively affecting the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water supplies.

ODW Director, Holly Myers, is an EWEC member and monitors conditions to ensure our stakeholders have a voice in this decision-making process. If a drought is declared, we will immediately update our stakeholders and provide information drought relief monies.

Reliable Repeat: Drought Resources and Help

For more information on water shortage response plans, resources, and help on what water systems can do to conserve water and work with their customers, [see our H²Ops Drought Issue Summer 2019 edition \(PDF\)](#). ◆

Lead Service Line Inventory—Have you Started?



A new requirement for EPA, under Section §141.84 of the federal Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR), is requiring community and non-transient non-community (NTNC) Group A public water systems to develop and submit a service line inventory by October 16, 2024. **If you are not already aware of this requirement, please take note.**

Revision of the Lead and Copper rule is a direct result of the Flint Michigan event. It supports the public health protection goal of removing lead from public water systems. In the western states, we do not find many lead service lines in use. We do find lead goosenecks or connectors, which is not a requirement to inventory. Knowing where they are will help with sample site identification and planning removal.

The LCRR requires community and NTNC water systems to review records to determine service line materials. It also requires building a process to capture material information during routine operations, maintenance, and construction activities. To meet the rule requirement, you must review the following:

- ◆ All construction and plumbing codes, permits, and existing records or other documentation that indicates the service line materials used to connect structures to the distribution system.
- ◆ All water system records, including distribution system maps and drawings, historical records on each service connection, meter installation records, historical capital improvement or master plans, and standard operating procedures.
- ◆ All inspections and records of the distribution system that indicate the material composition of the service connections that connect a structure to the distribution system.

Key point: You do not have to dig to complete the lead service line inventory.

The lead service line inventory must include material data on both the water-system-owned portion of the service line (water main to the meter) and the private-side portion of the service line (meter to the building inlet). Internal premise plumbing is not required to be inventoried. Each service line must be classified as either:

- ◆ Lead,
- ◆ Galvanized requiring replacement (GRR),
- ◆ Non-lead, or
- ◆ Lead status unknown.

Pipe diameter and lead ban dates are key to quickly identifying the service material type as non-lead.

If you have unknowns, lead, or GRR, you will be required to update the inventory.

We offer Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRF) to inventory and address lead service line replacements.

For those seeking funding, we will offer a second LSL funding cycle during the Construction Loan cycle. We will accept online applications October 2 through November 30, 2023, through WALT. Lead Service Line Inventory loans will be 0.0 percent interest rate, 2.0 percent loan fee, ten-year repayment period, and two-year time of performance. LSL Replacement loans will be 2.25 percent standard interest rate, 1 percent loan fee, twenty-year repayment period, four-year performance period. Minimum loan request is \$25,000. There is no maximum loan request. Potential for reduced interest rate and loan principal forgiveness for disadvantaged communities or small water systems serving less than 10,000 people. We will hold webinars about the funding on September 20, 2023, at 10 a.m. [Go to our DWSRF webpage for more information.](#)

As of the date of this publication, the following tools are available to assist community and NTNC Group A public water systems prepare for compliance with the LCRR:

- ◆ [Department of Health website—Lead Service Line Inventory—EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions webpage.](#) Check here often. We continue to update this page with information and publications.
- ◆ [EPA guidance webpage](#), includes Guidance for Developing and Maintaining a Service Line Inventory and Developing and Maintaining a Service Line Inventory: A Small Entity Compliance Guide.
- ◆ [EPA's Fact Sheet for Developing and Maintaining a Service Line Inventory \(PDF\).](#) ◆

Please share this newsletter with anyone who might be interested. [Sign up for future issues.](#)

[Read ODW Now online.](#)



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