

F.01

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER

Subject: Use of iodine for disinfecting drinking water


Purpose: In some instances, the use of iodine as a drinking water disinfectant has some merit. Although not encouraged by this Department, iodine disinfection for public drinking water can be considered within the framework of the following policy.

POLICY

1. Because of the uncertainty of effects on human health by consuming iodinated water on a long term basis, disinfection of public supplies which serve permanent consumers is not approvable.
2. Iodination may be used for those drinking waters where consumers are transient and use the water for drinking purposes for periods of no more than three weeks.
3. Iodination may be used for emergency purposes of duration not to exceed three weeks.

Justification

The EPA has determined that long term exposure of certain susceptible individuals to iodine may constitute an unacceptable health risk. Impairment of thyroid function appears to be the health impact which is of concern. Since the susceptibility of individuals to iodine in any population cannot be readily determined, it has been decided that exposure to iodine through drinking water routes be limited. Therefore, only short term (three weeks or less) use of iodine additives in drinking water are considered to be acceptable. Long term use for the general population is not advised.

Approved By:  Date: 6/2/92