



Washington's newsletter for waterworks operators.

Sanitary surveys, it's your turn



We took steps in the 1990s to ensure that all public water systems get routine sanitary surveys. Now, after several rounds of routine sanitary surveys, we all have a better understanding of best management practices for water system operation and maintenance, system management, and financial viability. We still find some obvious significant deficiencies, but less frequently in subsequent visits. Through sanitary surveys and technical assistance we have worked together to improve the safety and reliability of drinking water statewide.

Now, it's time for operators to apply lessons learned from the survey process by doing self-surveys. You can use the last sanitary survey report as a guide to perform self-surveys and stay ahead of the curve. Fix any deficiencies you find now, before they become a problem.

Scheduling self-surveys throughout the year, as part of your routine operation and maintenance, will mean fewer deficiencies found during sanitary surveys. You should keep written logs of your self-inspections, any maintenance performed, and photographic records of reservoir roof openings.

By doing these routine self-inspections, you will be doing your part to improve the safety and reliability of your public water system. You'll also be preparing for your next successful sanitary survey.

Revised Total Coliform Rule will require Self-Assessments

The Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) will require water systems to inspect or assess their water systems when they have coliform problems. RTCR goes into effect April 1, 2016. It will increase public health protection by requiring water systems to find and fix defects that could provide a pathway for microbial contaminants to enter the distribution system.



Common Deficiencies

Sources

- Openings in the wellhead
- Potential contaminants in the Sanitary Control Area
- Emergency sources connected
- No raw water sample tap
- No security protection

Reservoirs

- Hatch cover not sealed properly
- Improper vent construction
- Vent screen missing or openings too big
- Overflow screen missing or damaged
- No security protection

Treatment

- Chemicals not NSF or ANSI 60/61 approved
- Not working properly
- Cross connection at chemical solution tank
- No post-treatment sample tap

Pumps

- Unscreened discharge on pump control valve
- Over cycling of pumps

Management

- No Coliform Monitoring Plan
- No Emergency Response Plan
- No O&M Procedures
- No Cross-Connection Control Program
- Not implementing plans