

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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2018 DRINKING WATER IN MAINE

A REPORT FROM THE MAINE CDC
DRINKING WATER PROGRAM



Dear Reader:

I am pleased to introduce the annual report of Public Drinking Water in Maine. This report is intended to provide you with an overview of public water system compliance in Maine, including general water quality measurements and tracking of the State of Maine Drinking Water Program's efforts to help systems stay in compliance and continue to provide safe drinking water.

Safe and reliable supplies of drinking water are essential for public health protection, as well as the economic viability of communities. Maine is fortunate to have an abundance of clean water available for public water systems to protect, collect, treat, store, and distribute. The Drinking Water Program (DWP), which is part of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is responsible for ensuring that public water systems remain in compliance with federal and state regulations related to safe drinking water.

Maine's DHHS has been providing public health protection through drinking water regulations since the early 1900's when typhoid and cholera outbreaks were common due to the consumption of contaminated drinking water. In 1976, the DWP was established as a program within DHHS and began administering the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Since then, public water systems have been required to meet an increasing number of rules and regulations related to safe drinking water.

I express my appreciation to all the talented women and men working diligently throughout Maine to ensure that the public is supplied with high quality, affordable, and safe drinking water. I hope you find this report informative and helpful.

Yours for safe drinking water,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Abbott, P.E., C.G., Director, Maine CDC Drinking Water Program



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ABOUT THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM

PRIMACY

The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program carries out the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, which is administered through the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. Maine was granted primacy by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

MAINE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATION

The Maine Legislature enacted Maine's Water for Human Consumption Act to authorize Maine to administer both State rules and federal safe drinking water regulations. This law grants the Drinking Water Program oversight of all operational aspects of public water systems in Maine that impact drinking water service and public health.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Drinking Water Program works to ensure safe drinking water and protect public health in Maine by administering and enforcing drinking water and subsurface wastewater regulations and providing educational, technical, and financial assistance.

ORGANIZATION

The Drinking Water Program is organized into three teams: Engineering and Water Resources, Data Management and Program Support, and Public Water System Inspection. Each team plays a crucial role in ensuring that Maine's public water systems provide safe, reliable drinking water to their customers.

THE ROLE OF DRINKING WATER IN PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION

The United States has one of the safest public drinking water supplies in the world. Over 286 million Americans consume tap water from community public water systems. The United States Environmental Protection Agency regulates drinking water quality in public water systems and sets maximum concentration levels for pollutants in water.

Drinking water sources can be susceptible to pollution and sometimes require treatment to remove disease-causing contaminants. Contamination of drinking water supplies can occur in the source water and the distribution system. Sources of water contamination include naturally-occurring chemicals and minerals (e.g., arsenic, radon, uranium), local land use practices (e.g., fertilizers and pesticides), manufacturing processes, and sewer overflows or wastewater releases.

The presence of contaminants in water can lead to adverse health effects, including gastrointestinal illness, reproductive problems, neurological disorders, and cancer. Infants, young children, pregnant women, older populations, and those with compromised immune systems may be especially susceptible to illness from some contaminants.

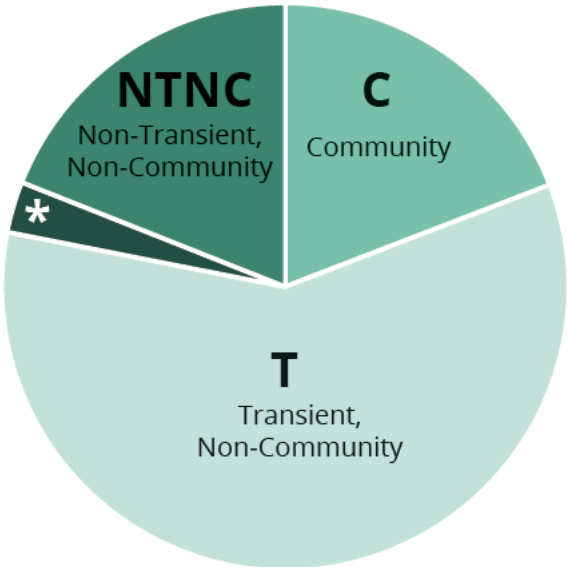
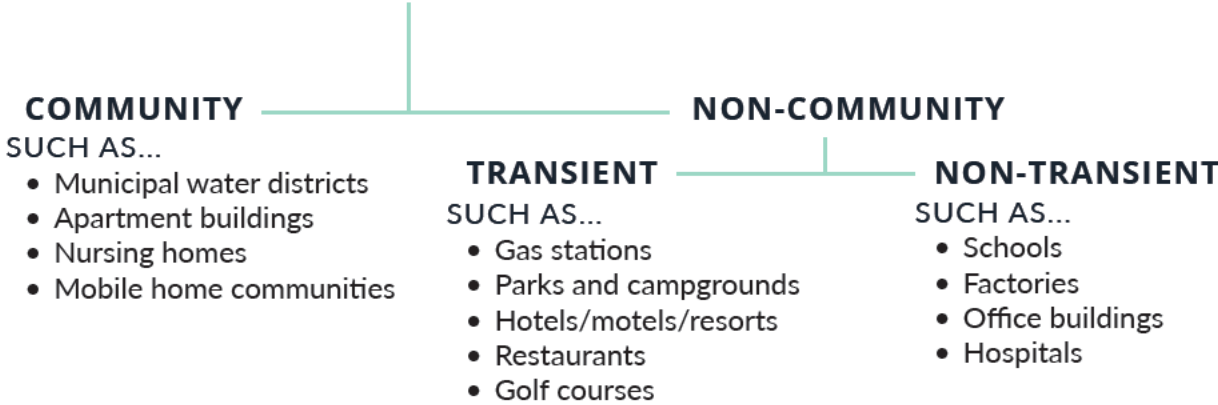
By administering the Safe Drinking Water Act in Maine, the Drinking Water Program is working with public water systems to ensure the delivery of clean, safe drinking water to all consumers.



WHAT IS A PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM?

Public water systems provide water for human consumption through pipes and other constructed conveyances (distribution system) to at least 15 service connections, or serve a minimum average of 25 people for at least 60 days per year. Public water systems are divided into two categories: Community and Non-Community. Non-Community systems are identified as either Transient or Non-Transient.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS



- COMMUNITY**
376 water systems serving 677,580 people
- NON-TRANSIENT, NON-COMMUNITY**
373 water systems serving approximately 62,700 people
- TRANSIENT, NON-COMMUNITY**
1,143 water systems serving over 188,900 people
- BOTTLE WATER/VENDING MACHINES**
57 water systems (populations served is not available for this type of system)

MAINE IS A WATER RICH STATE

Maine Surface Waters

Maine has **4,537** square miles of surface waters, making up approximately 13% of the State's total area (US Geologic Survey.) This includes over **9,000** lakes and ponds and over **32,000** miles of rivers and streams. Maine has **58** surface waters that serve as the source of drinking water for Mainers.



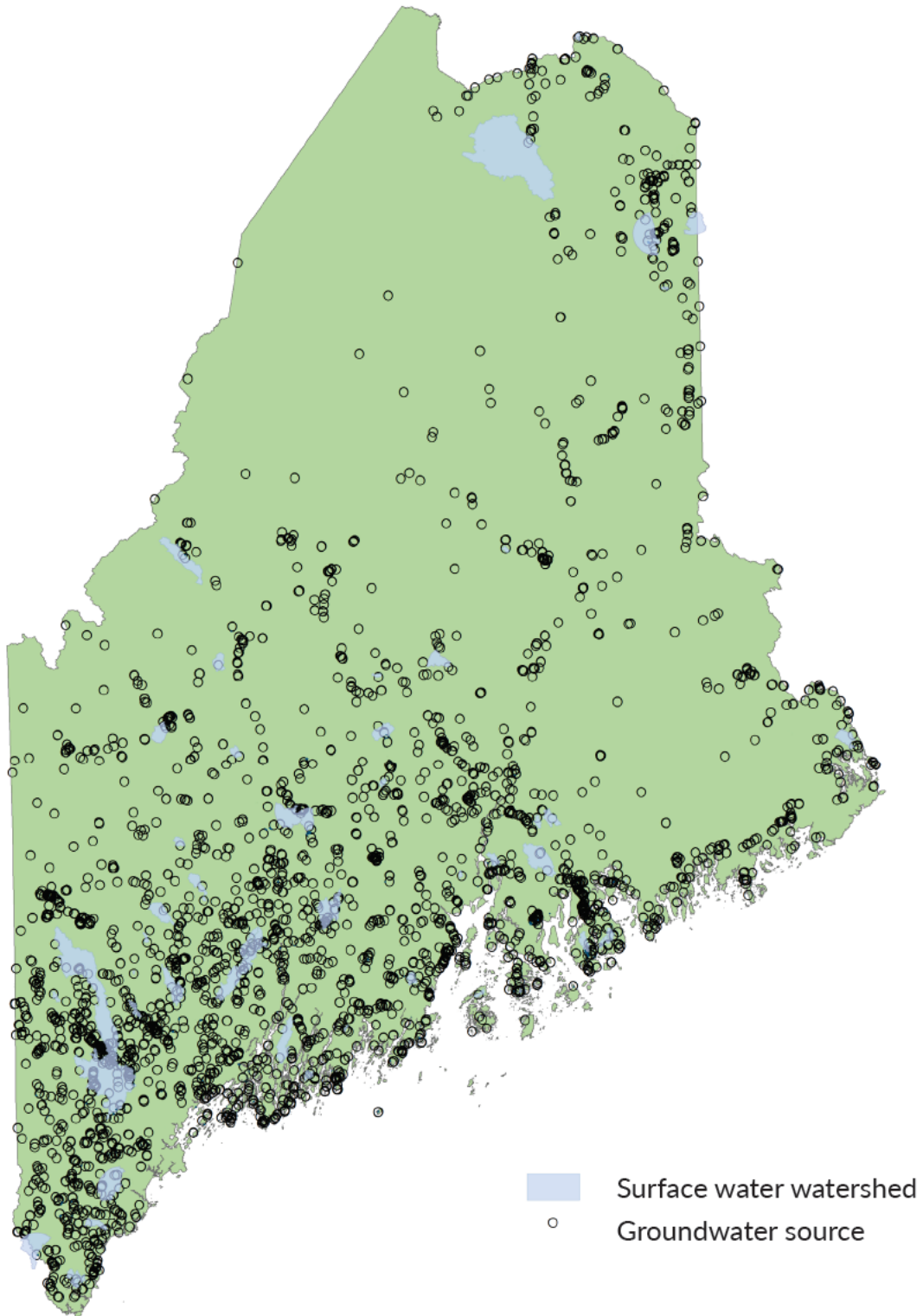
Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifers in Maine

Aquifers are geologic formations that are capable of yielding a usable amount of groundwater to a well. "Significant" sand and gravel aquifers refer to those that are likely to provide drinking water supplies (as defined by the Maine State Legislature.) Maine has **1,300** square miles of mapped sand and gravel aquifers.



PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS IN MAINE

Maine has nearly 2,000 public water systems that rely on groundwater and surface water sources around the State. Approximately 94% of Maine's public water systems rely on groundwater. However, 48% of the population is served by public water systems that use surface water bodies as their drinking water source.



PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITIES

While the Drinking Water Program serves as the regulatory body for public drinking water systems in Maine, the systems themselves are responsible for ensuring their ability to provide safe drinking water. These responsibilities include routine operations and maintenance, regular sampling of post-treatment drinking water, and reporting data to both the Drinking Water Program and to consumers served by the water system.

Operations and Maintenance

Regardless of size and complexity, no public water system can be fully automated. All systems require human oversight and every piece of equipment requires some level of maintenance. Some water systems must employ licensed water operators with qualifications consistent with the complexity of the water system equipment. To ensure all public water systems serve safe drinking water to the public, sanitary surveys are performed every three or five years - depending on the type of system. Sanitary surveys are routine inspections conducted by the Drinking Water Program's public water system inspectors. Learn more about sanitary surveys on page 11.

Routine Sampling

Depending on the type of public water system and water source, water quality testing is required for a variety of contaminants on a routine basis. Specific sampling requirements for public water systems may differ based on site specific characteristics and water quality results. Table 1 details a general sampling summary by system type.

Table 1. Routine sampling schedules for public water systems.

	T	NTNC		C	
		Surface Water	Groundwater	Surface Water	Groundwater
Total Coliform Bacteria	Quarterly or monthly (based on risk and history)				
Nitrates	Annually				
Inorganics	Determined by sampling history	Annually	Every three years	Annually	Every three years
Volatile Organics*		Based on risk and history (quarterly-every three years)			
Synthetic Organics*		Based on risk and history (quarterly-every three years)			
Lead and Copper		Based on population and history (six months-three years)			
Radionuclides		Not applicable		Based on history (quarterly-nine years)	
Disinfection Byproducts		Quarterly	Based on population: >500: annually <500: every three years	Quarterly	Based on population: >500: annually <500: every three years

T = Transient, Non-Community NTNC = Non-Transient, Non-Community C = Community
(See page 5 for a description of system types.)

* Waivers available to allow decreased sampling frequency

Reporting to the Maine Drinking Water Program



Photo: US EPA

Sample Results

Public water systems send water samples to accredited laboratories for analysis. These laboratories then report the sample results to the Drinking Water Program within the time-frame set by the system's specific requirement. Although the accredited laboratory reports sample results directly to the Drinking Water Program, the public water system is ultimately responsible for ensuring that water quality results are reported correctly and submitted on time.

Monthly Operating Reports

All public water systems that add chemical(s) to their water systems for treatment are required to send monthly operating reports to the Drinking Water Program. These reports describe what chemical(s) were added to their water systems each month.

Reporting to Consumers

Consumer Confidence Reports

Every year, community water systems are required to develop and distribute a Consumer Confidence Report. These reports detail the previous year's water quality information and must be shared with consumers. You can find your own Consumer Confidence Report on the Environmental Protection Agency's website: www.epa.gov/ccr.



Photo: US CDC

Public Notification

The Public Notification Rule requires public water systems to notify consumers when a violation occurs. Scope and delivery method of public notices vary, depending on the type of violation.

MAINE'S COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS MEET FEDERAL STANDARDS

2018 Community Water Systems Performance Data

Under the Government Performance and Results Act for Drinking Water, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) collects data related to reported health-based violations of drinking water standards. As illustrated in the table below, Maine has met standards based on the 2018 EPA National Target for safe drinking water.

	Community Systems ¹	Community Population ²	Community Person Months ³
2018 US EPA National Target	87%	92%	95%
2018 Actual US EPA Region 1 ⁴ Results*	94.9%	92.8%	94.2%
2018 Maine Results*	94.9%	98.0%	99.1%

¹ Community Systems: Community water systems meeting all health-based standards.
² Community Populations: Population served by community water systems that meet all health-based standards.
³ Community Person Months: *Person months* refers to the time during which a community water system provides drinking water that meets all applicable health-based standards, calculated by multiplying the community's population by 12 months.
⁴ EPA Region 1 encompasses the six New England states (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island) and ten Tribal Nations residing within that geographic area.



SUPPORT FOR MAINE'S PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS

Sanitary Surveys

Public water system inspectors conduct routine sanitary surveys for each public water system. A sanitary survey is a review of a water system to identify any deficiencies and make recommendations for improvements. The sanitary survey also offers a chance for water operators to ask questions and learn about their requirements and responsibilities.

Community water systems and bottled water facilities are inspected every three years, while non-transient, non-community water systems and transient water systems are inspected every five years.



Municipal public water system inspector, Denise Douin, inspects Greater Augusta Utility District's well on a sanitary survey.

Site Visits to Public Water Systems

The Drinking Water Program's public water system inspectors provide on-site advice and assistance to public water systems regarding operation, maintenance, treatment, quality control, testing waivers, and testing requirements.

The Drinking Water Program also partners with Maine Rural Water Association to provide water systems with free, on-site technical assistance. Technical assistance is available to help systems learn or review the proper operation of a treatment process, collecting samples, filling out reports, regulatory compliance, leak detection and line location, and development of emergency response plans and vulnerability assessments.

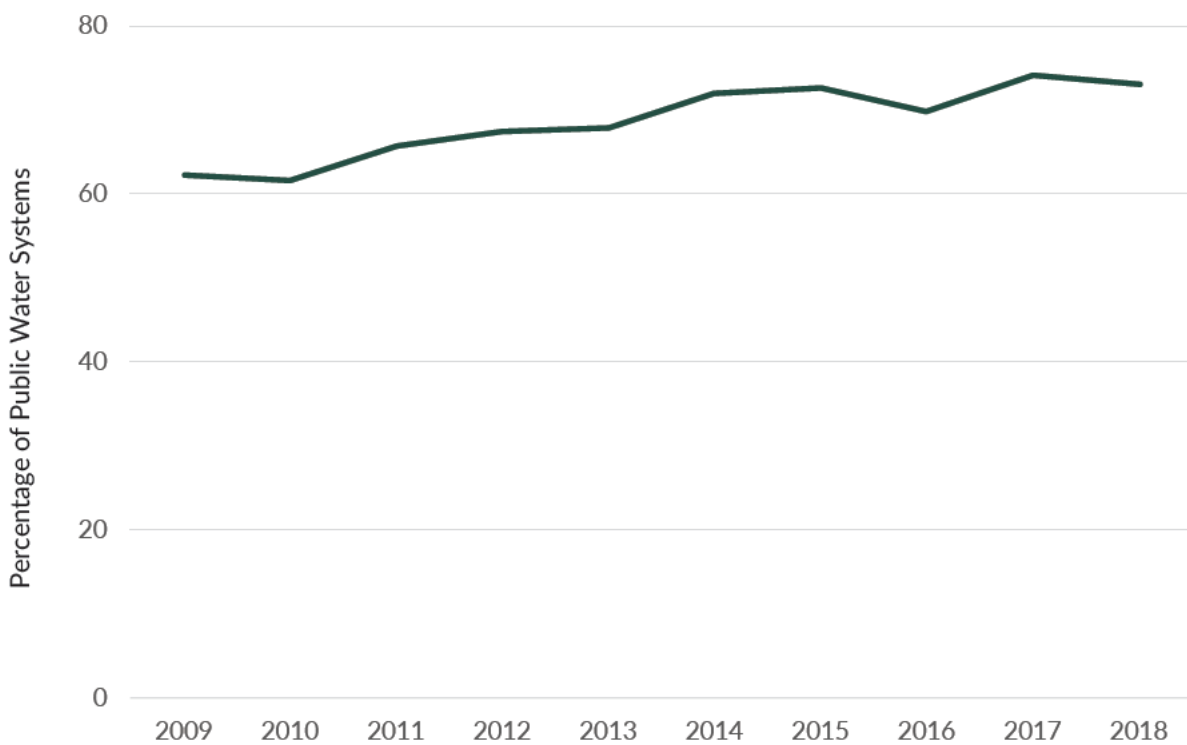
Table 2. Account of public water system sanitary survey and site visits over the past decade.

S A N I T A R Y S U R V E Y S	395	2009	1206	S I T E V I S I T S
	467	2010	1721	
	409	2011	1641	
	494	2012	1698	
	481	2013	1698	
	444	2014	1502	
	464	2015	1454	
	306	2016	1324	
	462	2017	1240	
	422	2018	1016	

MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF MAINE'S PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS

Comparing rates of public water system compliance from year to year is one method of measuring the success of public water systems in supplying safe drinking water. Violations are issued to public water systems when a system does not meet all the regulations mandated by the Safe Drinking Water Act.

This report illustrates a number of measures to describe the state of public drinking water in Maine over the past ten years. As is evident in the data presented here, public water systems in Maine have been steadily improving and we hope to continue this trend into the future.



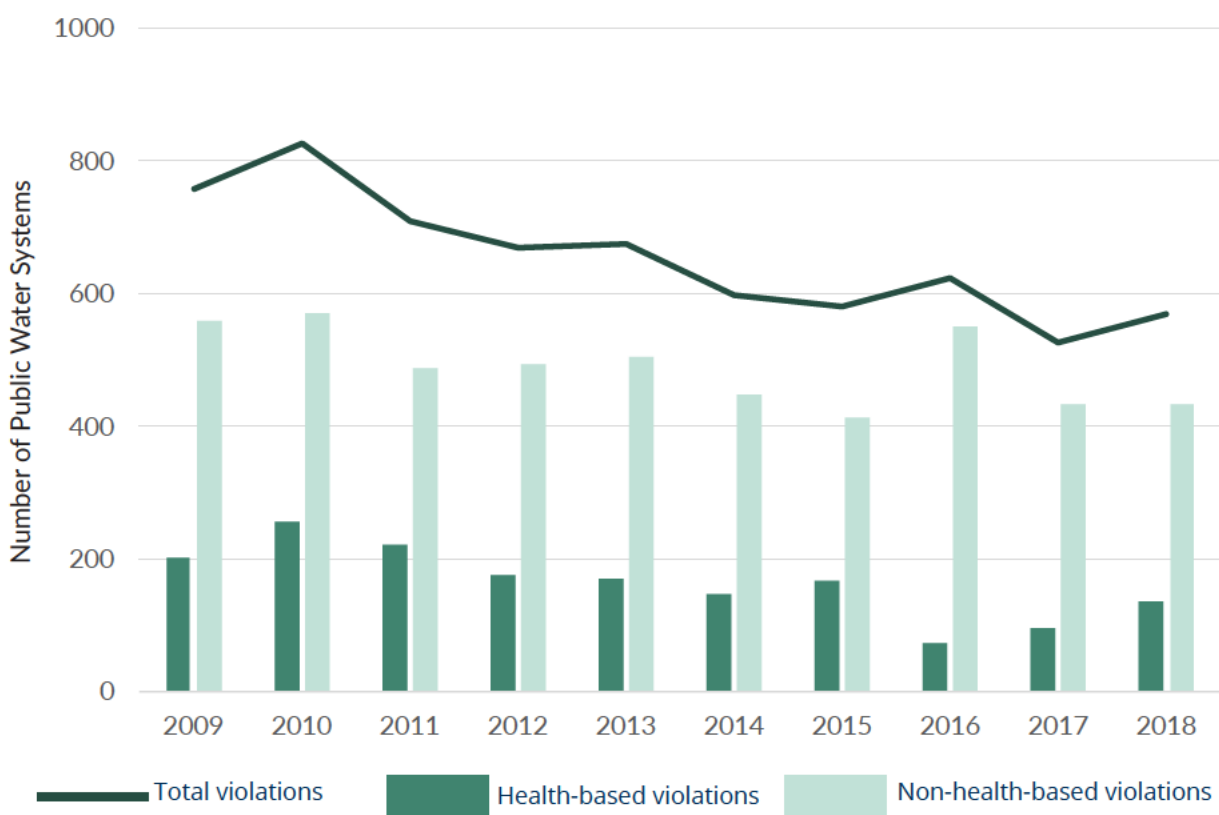
Public Water Systems in Compliance: 2009-2018 The percentage of public water systems in compliance (receiving no violations) has been steadily increasing over the past decade, an important gain for public health and safety.



Health-based and Non-health-based Violations

Health-based violations are issued when water sample results show the presence of contaminant(s) at numbers above a **maximum contaminant level (MCL)** or when a **treatment technique (TT)** requirement is not met. The maximum contaminant level is set by the Environmental Protection Agency and is based on human health and safety standards. The treatment techniques are specified processes intended to reduce the level of a contaminant. (See more about MCL and TT below.)

Non-health-based violations are violations that are not directly related to human health and safety. These types of violations typically arise when public water systems neglect to report test results to the Drinking Water Program, fail to test drinking water for a regulated contaminant, and/or fail to notify their customers of violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act.



Public Water Systems With Violations: Overall, the number of public water systems receiving violations has decreased over the past ten years. Non-health-based violations remain a high percentage of the total violations.

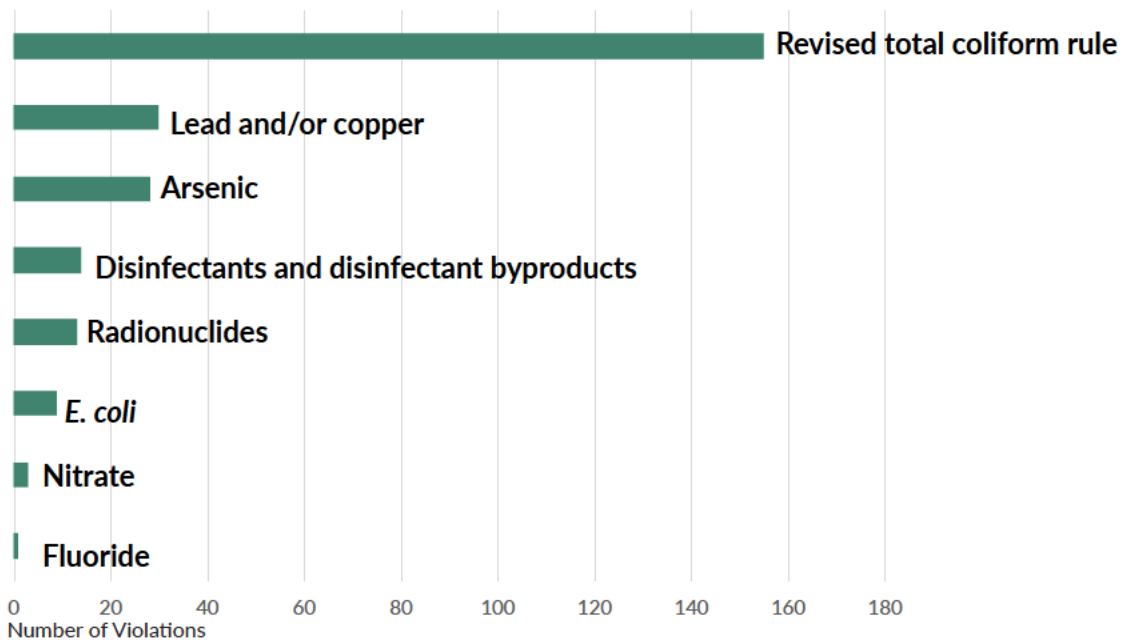
TREATMENT TECHNIQUE (TT)

Treatment techniques are water treatment processes that reduce the level of contamination in drinking water. For certain contaminants, the EPA establishes treatment techniques instead of an MCL. Some treatment techniques are water treatment processes, such as those established for viruses, bacteria, and turbidity under the Surface Water Treatment Rule. Other treatment techniques involve public education requirements, as in the case of the Lead and Copper Rule.

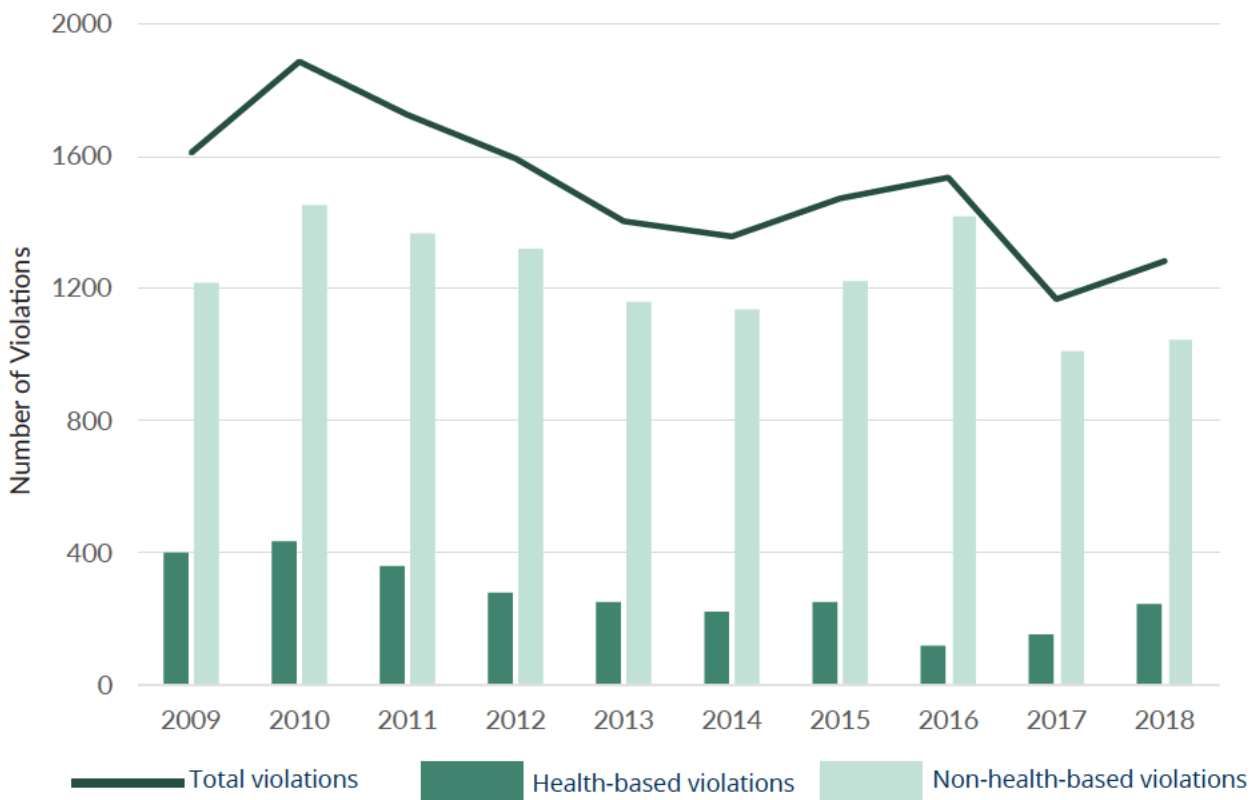
MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL (MCL)

A maximum contaminant level is the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. These levels are set as close as feasible to the *maximum contaminant level goal* or MCLG. The MCLG is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected health risk. When the MCL level is set for a contaminant, public health, available technology, and cost are all taken into consideration.

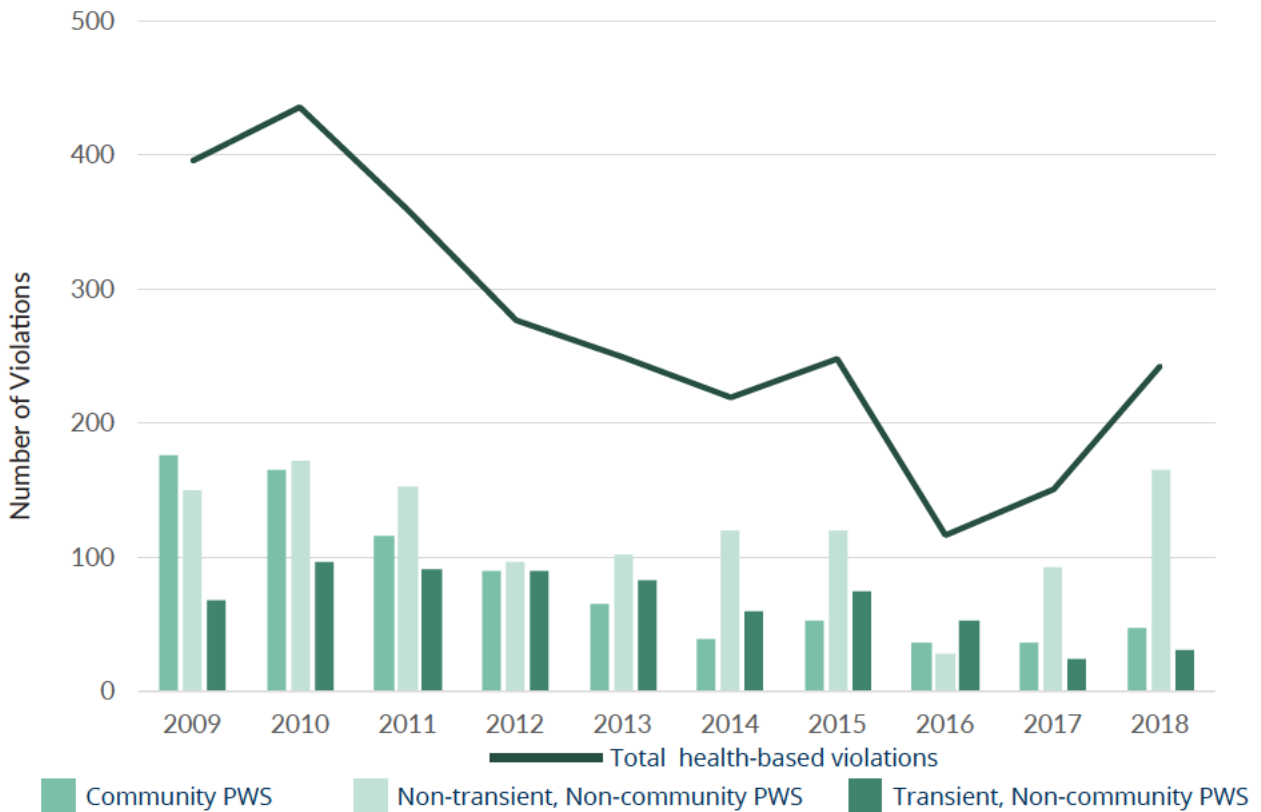
MEASURING SUCCESS CONTINUED



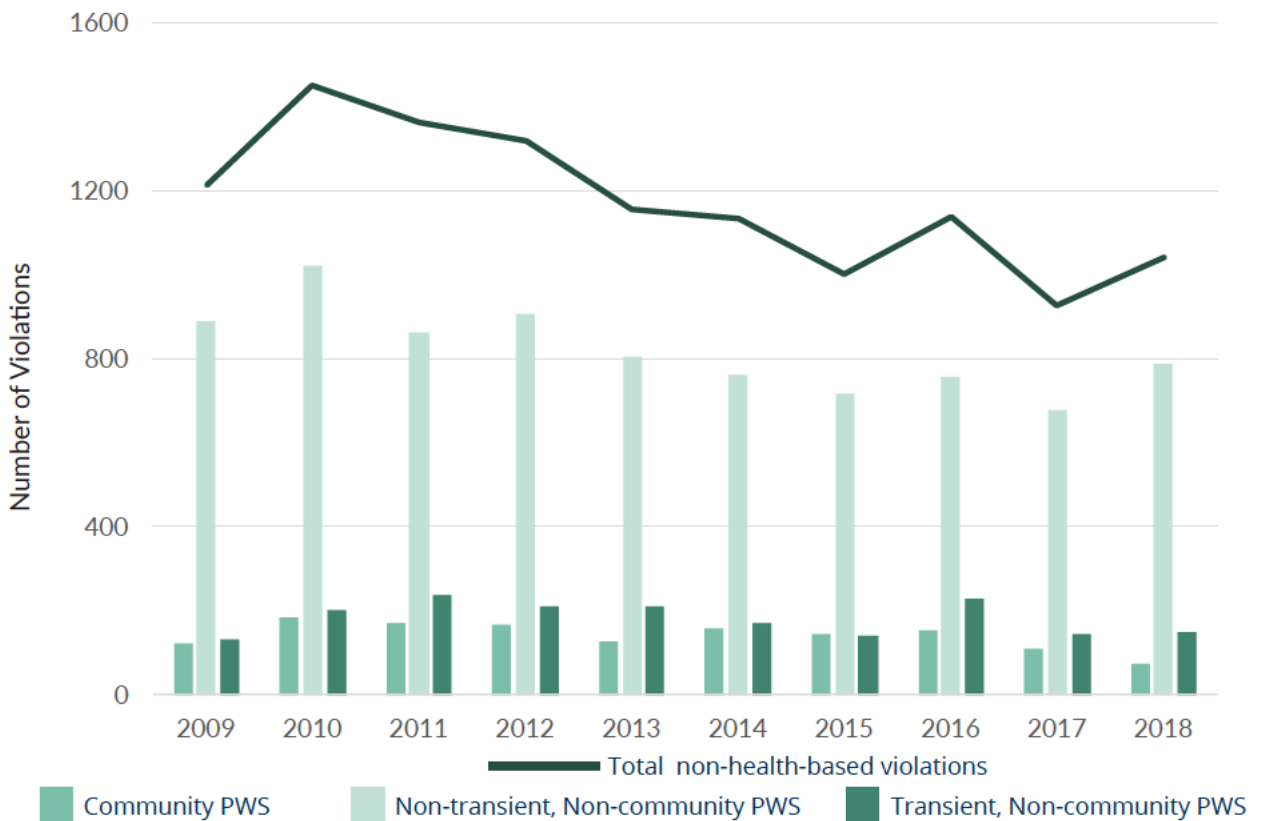
Health-Based Violations Issued in 2018 for Regulated Contaminants: Violations are issued when a sample result exceeds a drinking water standard for a regulated contaminant. In 2018, violations issued under the revised total coliform rule (RTCR) were the most common health-based violations, representing 61% percent of the total violations for the year.



Violations by Year: 2009-2018 In the past ten years, the overall number of violations issued to public water systems has gone down.

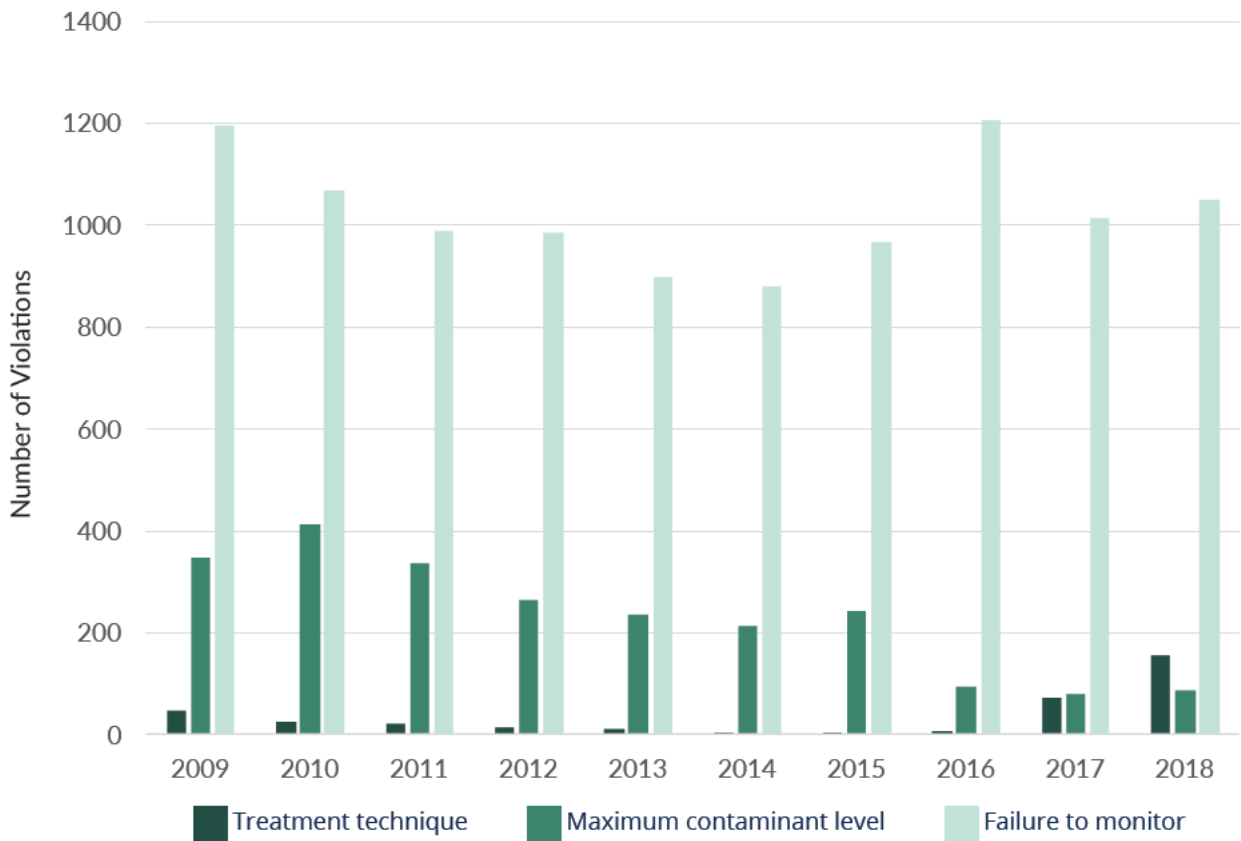


Health-based Violations by Year: 2009-2018 Ten years of total health-based violations by public water system type.



Non-health-based Violations by Year: 2009-2018 Ten years of total non-health-based violations by public water system type.

MEASURING SUCCESS CONTINUED



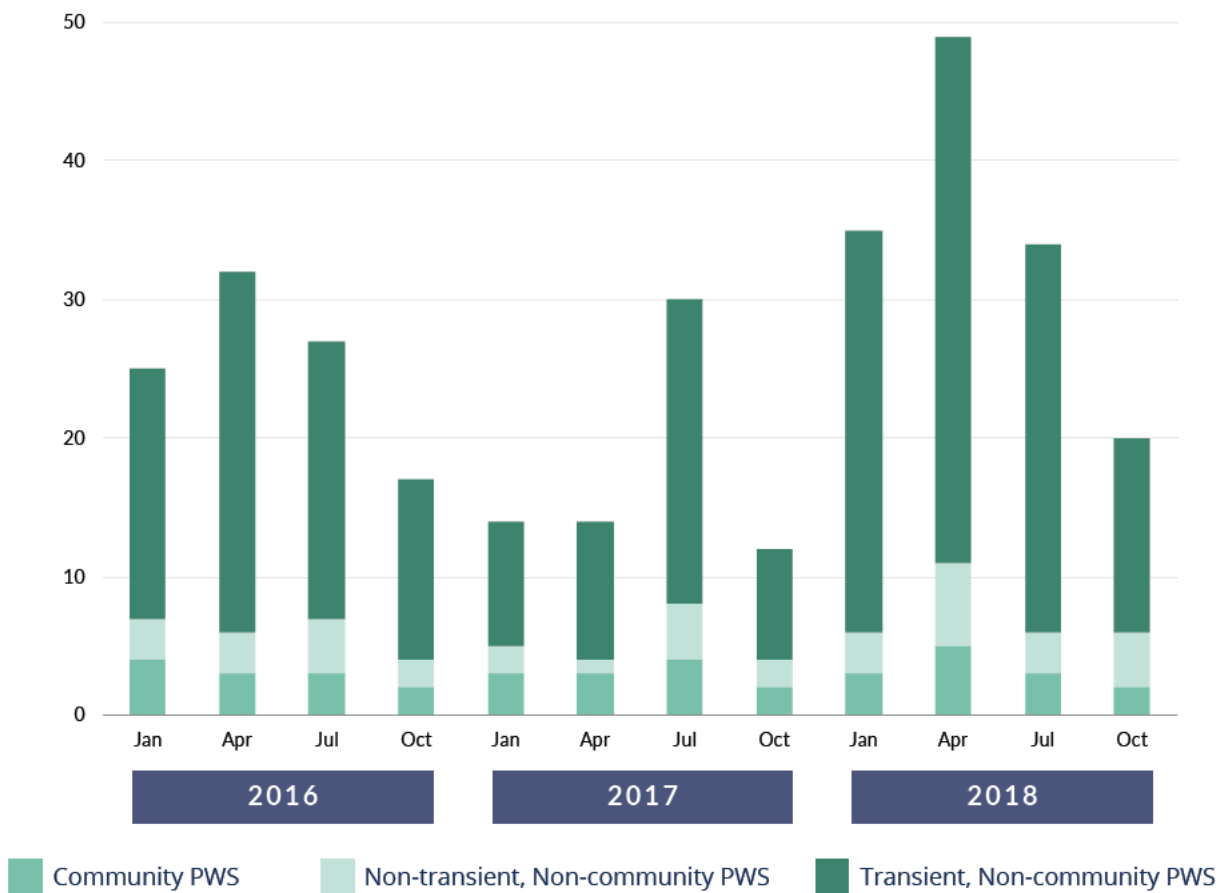
Total number violations by violation type: Public water systems may receive violations in the form of: maximum contaminant level (MCL) (see page 13), treatment technique (see page 13), or failure to monitor/failure to report violations. Failure to monitor or report violations (non-health-based violations) occur much more frequently. Failure to monitor violations arise when a public water system either does not test for a contaminant it is required to test for, or does not report results to the Drinking Water Program.



Enforcement: Serious Violators

Enforcement of public water systems occurs when a public water system violates federal or state drinking water regulations and does not address the non-compliance issue in a timely manner. The Environmental Protection Agency’s Enforcement Targeting Tool is a method for determining which public water systems require enforcement actions. The tool extracts data from each primacy agency in the country to identify public water systems with violations that do not appear to have been resolved or addressed. It uses a set formula based on violation type, length of violation, type of public water system, and population served.

Public water systems are prioritized for enforcement action to facilitate a return to compliance. The Drinking Water Program must address or resolve priority status systems within 60 days of the Environmental Protection Agency’s quarterly Enforcement Targeting Tool report. Each quarter, the Drinking Water Program researches the accuracy of all of Maine’s priority-status public water systems on the Enforcement Targeting Tool list and reports progress or status of each system to the Environmental Protection Agency.



EPA’s Enforcement Targeting Tool: The number of public water systems in Maine by system type listed on the EPA’s Enforcement Targeting Tool. These systems have a priority status due to repeated compliance issues and generally must be addressed with an enforcement action.

KEEPING MAINE'S DRINKING WATER SAFE

The Drinking Water Program's Core Message

The Drinking Water Program promotes a core message of four principles designed to ensure that public water systems provide safe drinking water to their customers. The core message encourages water systems to continually work to identify, reduce, and eliminate risks and vulnerabilities to their water systems. The Drinking Water Program works to convey this message to all of Maine's public water systems on a daily basis through every interaction – whether a phone call, site visit, training session, or article in our newsletter.

The four principles of the Drinking Water Program's core message direct public water systems toward the overarching goal of ensuring safe drinking water for all their consumers.



CORE MESSAGE: PROTECT YOUR SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER

THE IMPORTANCE OF DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

The ideal drinking water source is in a remote, forested natural area with no nearby sources of pollution. However, most water sources are located near more densely populated areas, increasing the vulnerability of the source to contamination. Contamination, whether from harmful chemicals or biological organisms, often comes from activities on the land close to a drinking water source. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires all public water systems to produce safe water through a *multiple-barrier* approach. Source protection is the first and most important component of these barriers. If pollutants never reach a drinking water source, the risk for human consumption is greatly diminished – even if other barriers fail. Additionally, treating a contaminated drinking water is typically much more costly than protecting drinking water source areas.

KEEPING CONTAMINATION AWAY

Approval of a new public water system well requires contamination sources, particularly leach fields and underground fuel storage tanks, to be set back a minimum distance from a well. The Maine Rules Related to Drinking Water require all public water system wells to be 300 feet from potential sources of contamination and 1,000 feet from underground fuel storage tanks. When these setback distances cannot be met for unavoidable reasons, such as limited property size or wetlands, the Drinking Water Program administers setback waiver policies that help to mitigate the increased risk created by reduced setbacks. Mitigation may include increased sampling, well construction requirements, or, in some cases, a pre-treated septic process or drinking water treatment installation to remove any contaminants from the water supply. The Drinking Water Program's public water system inspectors administer these setback waiver policies whenever a well with reduced setback is proposed for approval.

ECONOMICS OF DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

The delivery of clean, safe drinking water to your tap costs money - not just to the consumer, but also to the provider. Natural infrastructure, such as forests and wetlands, promote infiltration and storage of rainwater, filter out contaminants, and reduce runoff and nutrient loading to surface water. These benefits ultimately reduce water treatment costs.

For every \$1 spent in source protection, an average of \$27 is saved in future water treatment costs!¹

*Treating contaminated groundwater supplies is on average, 30-40 times costlier than preventing contamination.*²

Surface Water Treatment Rule Filtration Avoidance

The Surface Water Treatment Rule requires all public water systems with sources from surface water or groundwater under the influence of surface water to disinfect and filter the drinking water they provide to consumers.

Only systems that demonstrate compliance with the stringent water quality criteria set forth in the rule may qualify for filtration avoidance. Maine has nine community water systems that qualify for, and currently maintain, filtration avoidance:

- Auburn Water District – Lake Auburn
- Bangor Water District – Floods Pond
- Brewer Water Department – Hatcase Pond
- Great Salt Bay Sanitary District – Little Pond
- Lewiston Water and Sewer Division – Lake Auburn
- Mount Desert Water District – Lower Hadlock Pond and Jordan Pond
- Portland Water District – Sebago Lake
- Presque Isle Utility District – Aroostook River (groundwater under the influence of surface water)
- Town of Bar Harbor Water Division – Eagle Lake



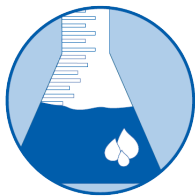
Synthetic Organic Compound Waivers

The Drinking Water Program may waive testing for synthetic organic compounds if regulated chemicals were not used in the source protection area. Synthetic organic compounds include substances such as herbicides, pesticides, and other semi-volatile compounds. Any public water system seeking a waiver from synthetic organic compound sampling must provide an approved wellhead or watershed protection plan and be able to demonstrate that land within 2,500 feet of each source is not under threat from synthetic organic compounds. Systems with waivers can save up to \$1,000 per source. All community and non-transient, non-community water systems are provided synthetic organic compound waiver applications on a three-year rotation.

In 2018, 221 water systems were issued waivers for a total of 804 semi-volatile herbicides and pesticides. This represents a savings of over \$100,000 to 40 community and 181 non-transient, non-community water systems.

¹Winiacki, E. (2012) Economics and Source Water Protection. Presentation. US Environmental Protection Agency.

²US EPA Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water (1995) Benefits and cost prevention: Case Studies of Community Wellhead Protection.



CORE MESSAGE: CONDUCT WATER QUALITY SAMPLING

Ensuring safe drinking water: The importance of sampling

All public water systems must sample their drinking water to ensure that the water is safe to drink. The Safe Drinking Water Act lists 86 contaminants that systems must test for. (See the page 23 for a complete list of regulated contaminants.) Any test results exceeding the standard may require treatment, replacement of source, or blending with other sources to reduce the contamination level. Sampling on a regular schedule can also show whether a water system is performing the way it is designed and can help signal if there is a problem with the source, treatment, or distribution system.



CORE MESSAGE: MAINTAIN WATER TREATMENT

The importance of drinking water treatment

Although public water systems come in all shapes and sizes, and no two are exactly the same, all systems share the same goal of providing safe, reliable drinking water to the communities they serve. To meet this goal, many water systems must treat their water to remove potentially harmful contaminants. The types of treatment provided by a specific public water system vary depending on the size of the system, the source (groundwater or surface water), and the raw water quality. Treatment systems are an important part of delivering safe drinking water but are only successful when the proper chemicals are applied in the correct amounts and all equipment and materials are regularly maintained and monitored. Effective oversight of treatment systems helps to ensure that high-quality drinking water is delivered to the public.

In 2018, 57% of Maine's public water systems had at least one type of treatment.

Monitoring treatment systems through monthly operating reports

All public water systems that add chemicals to their water must submit a monthly operating report to the Drinking Water Program. These reports help track the amount of chemical used, daily production of the water system, and the amount of chemical residual present in the distribution system. The Drinking Water Program reviews monthly operating reports to ensure that each public water system's treatment is operating efficiently and effectively to provide proper protection of drinking water.







CORE MESSAGE: MAINTAIN WATER PIPES AND STORAGE TANKS

The importance of maintaining pipes and storage tanks

A water system's distribution system, a network of piping and storage tanks, is an integral part of its ability to provide safe, clean water to consumers. It is important for water systems to regularly inspect their distribution systems as contaminants can enter drinking water through damaged pipes or tanks. Routine inspection and maintenance may also help water systems save money if they are able to find and repair leaks in a timely manner to abate water loss.



		<p>Together, these core messages help the Drinking Water Program support public water systems in their daily goal of delivering safe and reliable drinking water service to the people of Maine.</p>
		

REGULATORY HIGHLIGHTS: PFAS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Of the many emerging contaminants in the drinking water world, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are garnering a significant amount of attention, across the country and here in Maine.

PFAS are a class of chemical compounds that have been manufactured since the 1950s and are found in everyday consumer products. They are used in fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food, and other materials such as non-stick cookware and sticky notes. They are also used in fire suppression foam. They are chemically very stable and do not break down easily in the environment or in the human body.



Photo: Australian Department of Defense

In 2016, new information about the potential health effects of these chemicals, caused the Environmental Protection Agency to lower the health advisory for two PFAS chemicals: PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and/or PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid) to 70 parts per trillion (ppt.) Since then, eight states have established or are currently in the process of establishing their own PFAS standards that are different than the Environmental Protection Agency's limit of a combined total of 70 ppt for PFOA and PFOS.

In 2017, the Drinking Water Program sampled community and non-transient, non-community public water systems for PFAS. Systems were selected based on proximity to potential PFAS sources that were identified by the Environmental Protection Agency. Results from this sampling program showed elevated levels of PFAS in two of the tested systems.

In spring of 2019, the Drinking Water Program will conduct a second round of sampling in coordination with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. This program will test for PFAS in an additional 40-60 public water systems.

Furthermore, Governor Janet Mills issued an executive order in March of 2019 to create a task force to study the impact of PFAS in Maine. The task force will include Commissioners from the Departments of Environmental Protection; Health and Human Services; Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry; and Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management. Additional non-profit and industry experts will also be included on the task force.

CONTAMINANTS IN DRINKING WATER REGULATED BY THE MAINE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM

Contaminants in Drinking Water Regulated by the Maine Drinking Water Program

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires public water systems to monitor for 87 chemicals. These include 51 organic chemicals, 16 inorganic chemicals, eight microorganisms, eight disinfectants and disinfectant byproducts, and four radionuclides.

