



the Pipeline

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Oregon Drinking Water News

Drinking water fee increases take effect January 1

by Dave Leland

The 2015 Legislature considered increased drinking water fees as part of the Oregon Health Authority budget (See May 2015 Pipeline article). The Legislature subsequently approved fee increases, to be effective January 1, 2016, for the four specific Drinking Water Services functions that have fee authority: operator certification, backflow tester and specialist certification, plan review, and water system survey inspections.

Legislators took note of the following in committee discussions and approval of the fee increases:

- The four fee-supported functions are recognized as high priority to protect public health.
- Fees were last raised in 1994, 2006 and 2008.
- Raising fees to fully support the fee-based workload will ensure these specific functions are carried out. Federal Funds from EPA provide the majority of the revenue for Drinking Water Services overall,

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Thirtieth anniversary of primacy in Oregon

by Dave Leland

February 24 marked the 30th anniversary of Primacy in Oregon for the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (see 1986 photo of application signing by U.S. EPA Region X leadership). The improvements in drinking water safety are the result of concerted and successful efforts by the entire drinking water community including public water suppliers and operators, laboratories, consulting engineers, contractors, water supplier organizations, Drinking Water Services staff, local health departments, partner state agencies and U.S. EPA. Over the past 30 years, waterborne disease outbreaks in Oregon public water systems have gone from common occurrence to rarity.

Significant improvements along the way include:

- 200 public water systems using unfiltered surface water sources installed treatment, connected to other systems or drilled wells.
- 130 public water systems installed corrosion control treatment and reduced lead levels at the tap.
- 50 systems took action to reduce arsenic in source water.

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Visit Oregon Drinking Water Services at <http://healthoregon.org/dwp>

and the future amount of federal funding remains uncertain.

- The fee increases are designed to fully fund the fee-based functions through the next two biennia (through June 30, 2019). Current fees will more than double.
- The fee-based functions have a constant workload from biennium to biennium, since the total number of public water systems is stable over time. No new positions were requested; fee increases will fully support those current staff members assigned to these specific functions.

Drinking Water Services is keeping past promises to small water suppliers. There will be no fees for small water system operator certification; inspection fees are set to recover half of the inspection cost. We will use available Federal Funds for the difference.

The Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services referred the OHA budget with fee increases to the Joint Committee with a “do pass” recommendation on June 11, 2015. The Joint Committee on Ways and Means referred the OHA budget with fee increases to the floor with a do pass recommendation on June 26. The budget passed the Senate on June 30 and the House on July 2. The Governor signed the bill.

OHA then proceeded with administrative rulemaking to adopt the approved fee

increases. Drinking Water Services presented the proposed fee increase rule to the Drinking Water Advisory Committee (DWAC) on July 15, and DWAC recommended OHA proceed with rulemaking as presented. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was filed with the secretary of state on August 15. Public hearings were held September 22 in Bend, September 13 in Portland and September 29 in Springfield. Public comment closed on September 30. The Hearings Officer Report and agency response to comments was posted on November 6 and the final rule was filed with the secretary of state on November 16.

I very much appreciated discussions with many of you at the various stakeholder organization meetings, conferences and water schools I attended during both the legislative session and the rule adoption process. Going forward, OHA is working with the Legislature to revisit fees more regularly to limit the size of future increases.

Drinking Water Services continues to adopt program efficiencies. For example, we are beginning to implement credit card fee payment through an agency vendor to limit check production and handling for our customers. We also moved to two-year renewal periods for certifications to reduce the number of those transactions for our customers.

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- Other water suppliers dealt with bacteria, nitrate, disinfection byproducts, volatile and synthetic organic contaminants.
- EPA-regulated drinking water contaminants increased from 22 to 91. All of the 19 new EPA regulations for these contaminants have been adopted into Oregon regulations and implemented.

A major boost to getting all this done is the Drinking Water Revolving Fund, established in 1996. We committed \$330M in financial assistance to 173 Oregon communities for safe drinking water construction projects in partnership with the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority.

Looking ahead, challenges remain. We continue to concentrate on water quality and regulatory compliance issues at smaller public water systems statewide, given that 90% of Oregon public water system serve fewer than 500 people. We remain engaged in discussions at the national level as EPA develops standards for new contaminants such as perchlorate, volatile organics and strontium. Through unregulated contaminant monitoring requirements, EPA will investigate occurrence of additional contaminants of concern, including cyanotoxins, and determine need for regulation. Finally, EPA will review current regulations for revision and improvement, such as lead and copper.

We celebrate the success of our collective efforts, and look forward to continuing to collaborate with the water supply community to improve drinking water safety for Oregonians!

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Ernesta Barnes, EPA Region X Administrator; Dick Thiel (standing) and Mike Gearheard, EPA Region X management staff.



The Portland Water Bureau completed disconnection of the Mt. Tabor open finished water reservoirs in late December, 2015, as required by the EPA Long-term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule.



Drinking Water Advisory Committee Chair, Beth Myers, recognizes Theresa Huntsinger of the Oregon Environmental Council for her service on the committee.

Does your storage tank need maintenance?

by Michelle Byrd

Finished water storage tanks play an important role in providing safe drinking water. If storage tanks are not properly maintained, problems may arise that can increase the risk to human health and decrease the life of the tank. Concrete tanks exposed to freeze/thaw conditions may develop cracks at joints between the walls and roof, or concrete may spall or break off causing leaking or expose steel to corrosion. Any signs of damage or deterioration to the tank should be closely monitored and addressed.

Eliminating pathways to contamination

A direct pathway or opening into a storage tank could allow contaminant entry and affect water quality. It would also be a significant deficiency during a water system survey. Here is what to look for:

- Make sure the access hatch is watertight and locked to restrict entry. (see photo 1)
- Protect the overflow and drain line with a screen or mechanical device that completely closes. (see photo 2)
- Verify air vents are screened to keep out insects and animals such as birds or bats. Vents should be designed to prevent rain and windborne contaminants from entering the tank. (see photo 3)
- Seal gaps (telemetry ports, cathodic plates) that could allow contaminants into finished water.

Your regulator may request photos or other documentation of the current conditions on top of the storage tank. Be prepared to have this information during the water system's onsite survey.

Planning inspections and maintenance

Performing regular inspections will help identify issues that require maintenance. Maintenance may involve removing accumulated sediment



Photo 1: Access hatch



Photo 2: Overflow drain



Photo 3: Air vent

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or biological growth, recoating surfaces or making structural repairs. When making repairs or reapplying coatings, be sure all products in contact with finished water are NSF/ANSI Standard 61 certified. Also, don't forget to include all tank maintenance procedures in your water system's operations and maintenance manual. Here are some suggestions regarding the frequency and type of inspections:

- Daily or weekly – Inspect exterior tank features and grounds for signs of intrusion, vandalism or paint deterioration.

- Every one to four months – Inspect features that require climbing the tank.
- Every three to five years – Inspect the overall condition of the tank, which often requires taking the tank offline and draining it. If the tank cannot be drained (age/condition, service disruption) employing commercial divers is an option.

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April showers bring ... new requirements for seasonal water systems

by Betsy Parry

If your water system is defined as seasonal (serves the public only during certain months of the year), look for a letter and checklist in the mail this spring from Drinking Water Services (DWS).

There are two new requirements for seasonal water systems, effective April 1, 2016:

1. Monthly monitoring – Operators at seasonal systems must start collecting coliform samples each month during the operating season.
2. Seasonal startup procedures – Operators must complete and return to DWS a checklist certifying completion of required startup procedures before the system opens to the public each season. If your system meets one of the following exemptions, the seasonal startup procedures are not required, but you must still return the form before opening day:
 - System maintains pressure throughout the distribution system with at least one regular user all year long; or
 - System consists solely of a hand pump.

Failure to complete, sign and return the checklist to DWS before opening will result in a violation and require posting of public notice at the water system.

Note: Exemption from the startup procedures (which includes pre-season sampling) does not affect the requirement for monthly coliform monitoring during the operating season.

Check our website (www.healthoregon.org/dwp – see Revised Coliform Monitoring Requirements under “Hot Topics”) and the October 2015 Pipeline for more details. Your water system's regulator at the county public health department, Oregon DWS or the Oregon Department of Agriculture may also assist if you have questions.



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No joke, new rules for coliform bacteria arriving on April 1, 2016

by Brad Daniels

April Fools' Day 2016 is the effective date for new and revised rules related to coliform bacteria. Here are a few important things to remember about the new rules:

- An investigation will be required when either total coliform or *E. coli* is confirmed at a water system or when repeat samples are not collected;
- The number of repeat and additional routine samples required is reduced following a sample with total coliform present;
- Monthly monitoring will be required at seasonally operated water systems;
- Monitoring may be increased from quarterly to monthly at non-community water systems after certain violations; and
- Coliform sampling plans must be reviewed and updated if necessary before April 1, 2016.

For more information about the new rules, please see the October 2015 edition of the Pipeline at: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Operations/Pages/pipeline.aspx> or visit the Drinking Water Services website at: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Rules/Pages/revised-coliform.aspx>.



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2016 source water assessment updates

by Tom Pattee

Drinking Water Services staff will be updating source water assessments during 2016 so public water system owners, consumers and others have information available to initiate and promote activities to protect their drinking water sources. Drinking Water Services will provide source water area maps and potential contaminant source inventory results to those community and non-transient non-community water systems that have not yet received an assessment.

For those community and non-transient non-community that received an assessment report during 1998–2005, Drinking Water Services will:

- Determine if the mapped source water areas are still valid;
- Provide new source water area maps if needed; and
- Provide updated potential contaminant source inventory results.

For those transient non-community water systems that have not received an assessment report, a source water outreach area map will be provided.

Source water assessment activities will, in most cases, require a site visit to collect accurate well, spring and/or surface water intake locations, and to review potential contaminant source inventory data with the water system operator. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality staff will assist with surface water systems and will produce protection resource guides for both groundwater and surface water systems.

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Congratulations to our “Outstanding Performers”!

Jobs well done by the operators of these systems:

Water system name	County served
Burnside Water Association	Clatsop
Canyon City Water Department	Grant
Clackamas River Water - Clackamas	Clackamas
Coburg, City of	Lane
Creswell, City of	Lane
Dexter Shores Mobile Home Park	Lane
Dietz Air Park Water System	Clackamas
Emerald Valley MH & RV Park	Lane
Gervais Water Department	Marion
Gold Beach, City of	Curry
Hat Rock Mobile Court	Umatilla
Hiland WC - Heritage Water Co	Marion
Hillsboro, City of	Washington
Irrigon, City of	Morrow
McDougal Water System	Crook
Mill City Water Department	Linn
Milwaukie, City of	Clackamas
Mobile Village Inc	Multnomah
Mount Vernon, City of	Grant
Mulino Water District	Clackamas
Netarts Water District	Tillamook
North Clackamas County WC	Clackamas

North Powder Water District	Union
Otter Rock Water District	Lincoln
Petes Mountain Water Co	Clackamas
PP&L-Toketee Village	Douglas
Rainbow Water District	Lane
Ridgewood Dist Improv Co	Benton
Salmon Valley Water Company	Clackamas
Scio, City of	Linn
St Helens, City of	Columbia
Stayton Water Supply	Marion
Tigard, City of	Washington
Tualatin, City of	Washington
Umatilla, City of	Umatilla
Union, City of	Union
Valley View Water District	Multnomah
Vineyard Mountain Water	Benton
West Linn, City of	Clackamas
Wilson River Water District	Tillamook

These public water systems have most recently met the established criteria for outstanding performance (September 24, 2015–January 11, 2016). Outstanding performers are systems with no significant deficiencies identified, as well as no unresolved violations. All systems are evaluated during their routine Water System Survey, and those that meet the outstanding performer criteria have their survey frequency (and fee) reduced from every three years to every five years. To find out how to qualify, visit <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Operations/Pages/osp.aspx>.



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The following websites provide links to upcoming meetings and trainings related to drinking water.

Meeting calendar

Drinking Water Advisory Committee

▶ <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Pages/members.aspx>

Cross Connection Advisory Board

▶ <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/CrossConnection/Pages/advisoryboard.aspx>

Training calendar

▶ <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/OperatorCertification/Pages/training.aspx>