



MassDEP

Drinking Water Program
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Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov or 617-292-5770

The Drinking Water Updates can be found on-line at:
mass.gov/lists/communication-to-public-water-suppliers
or at the Statehouse Archives at : <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/826119>



Drinking Water Program Updates

2020-09-11

This week's program director email has these topics of interest:

1. MassDEP COVID-19 Information
MassDEP Public Water Supply Information (updated)
MassDEP COVID-19 Conference Calls
2. EPA Covid-19 Information
3. Free PFAS Testing for PWSs **Reminder** and Other Updates
4. Significant Drought Conditions in Massachusetts
5. CA becomes First State to Define Microplastics in Water
6. EPA – National Preparedness Month
7. Contract Operator Survey **Reminder**
8. Free Online Training on Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities
9. Capacity Development Webinars
10. Training Calendar

MassDEP COVID-19 Information

For all information go to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency>

Sign-up for the state messaging tool called “AlertsMA” which sends real-time notifications of COVID-19 alerts. To subscribe to these real-time notifications text the keyword **COVIDMA** to **888-777**. After signing up, you will receive short messages and links to information on your cell phone or other mobile device.

Masks and Face Coverings: On May 1, Governor Baker issued an order requiring the use of masks or face coverings in public situations when appropriate social distancing measures are not possible. [Order](#) | [Guidance](#)

Phase 3, Step 1 (as of July 6) - Re-opening Massachusetts

Until a treatment or vaccine for COVID-19 is available, life will not return to normal. We each have a collective responsibility to ensure that reopening proceeds smoothly and safely.

Everyone must follow public health directives and use common sense to protect yourself, your family, your neighbors, and vulnerable populations across the Commonwealth.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>

MassDEP Public Water Supply Information

MassDEP is coordinating with the water supply industries, agencies, and organizations to provide information about the impacts of COVID-19 in Massachusetts.

- Recorded weekly meetings with Commissioner Suuberg: [Water Suppliers Meetings on COVID-19](#)
- Questions from drinking water operators answered by MassDEP [Water Supplier FAQs](#)
- [Bacteria sampling at outside taps/spigots/hose bibs](#) (PDF 97 KB)
- [Bacteria sampling at hydrants using hydrant sampler](#) (PDF 87 KB)
- [Mitigating lead and copper levels in facilities after school closure due to COVID-19](#) (PDF 115 KB)
- Emergency Certification for Public Water System Temporary Closure (Non-Operational Status) For Non-Community (TNC/NTNC) public water suppliers ([Word 40KB](#)) ([PDF 149 KB](#))
- Drinking Water Operator license Extension Guidance during the public health emergency <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/guidance-regarding-the-orders-by-the-governor-extending-certain-occupational-and>
- MassDEP Building Flushing Information <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-building-flushing-information>
- Form to document non-compliance related to COVID-19 <https://www.mass.gov/doc/documentation-for-failure-to-comply-with-a-requirement-as-a-result-of-the-covid-19-emergency>

- Information on Training for Public Water Suppliers <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/drinking-water-training>
- **Reminder:** Please note that during the COVID-19 pandemic that MassDEP staff are generally working remotely. MassDEP-DWP cannot guarantee that posted hardcopy submittals will be delivered or received as expected. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to use eDEP, if available, for water quality monitoring reporting or if you mail in reports to also submit a PDF copy of the report by email to Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov. The subject line should include the PWSID, City/Town and type of report (e.g. 3035000 Boston Bacteria Report). Continue to mail the official hardcopy to the appropriate MassDEP Regional office but indicate on the cover letter or similar enclosure that the report(s) was sent in via email and include the date of the email.

MassDEP COVID-19 Conference Calls

MassDEP's Commissioner Suuberg is now holding monthly Zoom conference calls to all operators and interested parties. Here is a link to MassDEP's webpage, where recordings of Commissioner Suuberg's calls with the operators as well as FAQs for both water supply and wastewater are published: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/covid-19-information-for-drinking-water-and-wastewater-operators>. MassDEP will continue to populate this webpage with other relevant information related to the COVID-19 crisis.

*******These calls are going to a monthly schedule*******

The next call with Commissioner Suuberg is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 2 PM.

Please email all drinking water questions to MassDEP at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.

New Zoom Meeting Information

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://zoom.us/meeting/uJEtf-isqzstGhSf_beAtiSdfHxEd-69rQ/ics?icsToken=98tyKuytrjMrHtGVt1z9d7lvW4X-b-HyllZGmaVinhREfYlgZgXeLsdGf-QmAumB

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/550814507>

Meeting ID: 550 814 507

One tap mobile

+19294362866,,550814507# US (New York)

+13126266799,,550814507# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 301 715 8592 US

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US

Meeting ID: 550 814 507

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/550814507>

EPA COVID-19 Information

- EPA COVID-19 <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

Free PFAS Testing for PWS **Reminder** and Other Updates

Has your PWS signed up for a round of free PFAS sampling? Thanks to all the PWS that have signed up for the Free PFAS Laboratory Analysis Program, we appreciate the early efforts to identify PFAS levels in your system and the Commonwealth.

If your PWS has not yet signed up for free PFAS sampling, you can sign up at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/S7QHNF2>.

Question 13 of the free PFAS sampling program for PWS factsheet has been updated to encourage PWS to share their results over 20 ppt with their local officials as soon as possible, after being notified by MassDEP of confirmed results over 20 ppt. The updated document has also been posted at the following locations:

- <https://www.mass.gov/lists/communication-to-public-water-suppliers#emails-and-direct-mail->
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#laboratories,-testing-and-sample-collection->

The PFAS analytical report format has been updated. See <https://www.mass.gov/lists/laboratory-analytical-forms>.

If you have any questions about PFAS or the free PFAS sampling program for PWS please contact program.director-dwp@mass.gov: Subject PFAS

Significant Drought Conditions in Massachusetts

Above Normal Temperatures, Below Normal Rainfall Lead to Continued Level 2 Drought throughout the Commonwealth

Due to four months of below normal rainfall, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Kathleen Theoharides today declared a Level 2 – Significant Drought in all seven regions of the Commonwealth – the Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast, Southeast, Cape Cod, and Islands regions. The drought level remains unchanged from the previous month’s declaration. At a Level 2 – Significant Drought, as outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#), conditions are becoming significantly dry and warrant detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, emphasis on water conservation, more stringent watering restrictions, and technical outreach and assistance for the affected municipalities.

Click [here](#) to read the full press release.

CA becomes First State to Define Microplastics in Water

The State Water Resources Control Board on Tuesday approved the nation's first agency definition of microplastics, the first step in requiring local suppliers to test drinking water for small plastic particles that could hurt human health.

Background: Microplastics can enter drinking water supplies through a number of sources, including surface runoff, atmospheric deposition and sewer overflows, according to the World Health Organization. The health effects aren’t well-understood, but studies have found small plastic particles can migrate from animals’ digestive systems into other organs.

Why it matters: Eventually, drinking water agencies in California will have to test their supplies for plastic particles smaller than 5 millimeters and report their findings. And other states could take their cue from California as they begin to tackle the murky world of microplastic pollution.

Ahead of the vote, chemical companies lobbied the board to exclude biodegradable plastics and narrow the range of particle sizes that are considered microplastics, while environmentalists urged the board to stay firm on including biodegradable substances and a wider range of sizes. Narrowing the definition "would only make the problem seem more innocuous than it actually is," said Baani Behniwal, a policy associate with Californians Against Waste.

The board stuck to its proposed definition: "solid polymeric materials to which chemical additives or other substances may have been added, which are particles which have at least three dimensions that are greater than 1 nanometer and less than 5,000 micrometers." The definition excludes naturally derived polymers that haven't been chemically modified, which can include "bioplastics" made from starch and other biomass.

What's next: The board will propose testing methods by July 2021 that will target some subset of the defined range of microplastics, as the lower end of the range is too small to be detected using optical microscopes. The board may also adjust its definition as it evaluates testing methods. After it settles on a testing protocol, it will require water suppliers to test drinking water and report their findings for four years, as required by CA SB1422 (17R).

<https://www.politico.com/states/california/story/2020/06/16/california-becomes-first-state-to-define-microplastics-in-water-1293744>

EPA – National Preparedness Month

Enhance laboratory resilience training with the [Analytical Preparedness Full-Scale Exercise \(AP-FSE\) Toolkit](#). The [Toolkit](#) provides guidance for states, water utilities, and laboratories to conduct their own exercise and prepare for any disaster.

Use the [Water Utility Public Awareness Kit](#) to inform your community about the threats to your water system and motivate them to take action. The [Kit](#) provides resources for the most effective communication methods through print, web, and television.

Water Quality Surveillance and Response System [Capabilities Assessment Tool](#). Choose any one of six components to begin your assessment of how to identify existing resources that can be leveraged to improve drinking water quality surveillance and response capabilities.

Contract Operator Survey **Reminder**

Calling All Contract Certified Operators! MassDEP is currently updating its two online directories for certified drinking water operators who are willing to work on a contract basis for small public water systems. One directory lists individuals and the other lists businesses who employ certified operators and offer this service. Recently, we sent an email to the operators and businesses on both lists to confirm their continued interest on remaining on the list(s) and their contact information.

If you are an individual certified operator who is located on the current list and did not receive an email OR are an individual certified operator interested in being placed on the updated list, please complete the following survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GK6PZLN> .

If you are a business that employs certified operators and wish to be placed on the business list, please email program.director-dwp@mass.gov with "Contract Operator Business List" in the subject and we will follow up with you. The current lists and related information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info/details/certified-operator-directory>

Free Online Training on Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities (1.5 TCHs)

On September 28th from 1-2:30 PM, learn from state experts about the issue of lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities and free state assistance to help address it. This is especially relevant as facilities reopen after being closed due to the pandemic. Speakers include staff from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and University of Massachusetts-Amherst. This training has been approved for 1.5 training contact hours (TCHs) by the Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Facilities. This is a repeat of the training held on August 27th and additional TCHs will not be issued to individuals who attend both trainings.

Register at <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/4098645506171916289>

Note that:

- You must register with an email address with which you can be contacted after the training is complete. Please do not use an email address you do not check daily.
- ***This training must be taken on a computer or other electronic device (such as an iPad or tablet), and not only by telephone.*** Attendance will be monitored using tools only accessible on electronic devices. However, you are not required to use your computer camera (meaning you do not have to "show your face").

Attendance Statement

Please note the purposes of meeting requirements of the Massachusetts Board of Certification of Drinking Water Operators for issuing Training Contact Hours (TCHs):

- 1) The training session will be recorded.
- 2) Zoom tools will be used to monitor attendance throughout the 1.5 hours. These tools may include, but are not limited to, requests to "Raise Your Hand", answer a question poll that pops up on the computer screen, take a quick survey, etc.

3) You will be required to complete and return an evaluation of the training online within a set period of time.

MassDEP reserves the right to withhold Training Contact Hours if attendance cannot be verified.

RCAP Webinar – Water Partnerships (two-parts)

Tuesday, September 15 and Tuesday September 22

9:00 am to 11:00 am (both days)

In this free online workshop, you will learn about the types, benefits, challenges, and process of water and wastewater partnerships. Learn how partnerships can enhance the viability and sustainability of your system and explore potential opportunities for building capacity. The workshop will consist of two online sessions. It is recommended to attend both sessions for full benefit of the workshop, but not necessary.

Register for Part 1 [here](#)

Register for Part 2 [here](#).

Capacity Development Webinars

Environmental Finance Center Network

Financial Recovery from COVID-19 for Small Water Systems in Massachusetts

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 10:00am-12:00pm EST

Register [here](#).

Changes due to COVID-19 have affected water systems' finances. Questions remain about how to manage those financial implications as well as recovering from them. Learn about the financial impact trends on small water systems and next steps for recovery.

Understanding Harmful Algal Blooms and Water Supply:

A Primer for Municipal and Water Utility Staff

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 1:00pm-2:00pm EST

Register [here](#).

Learn how to recognize a harmful algal bloom and the underlying causes, as well as receive a brief overview of watershed management strategies aimed at preventing HABs.

Training

When you need training please look at the training calendar located at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/drinking-water-training-class-schedules.html> for upcoming trainings.

If you need a refresher on recently given trainings, you can review several training videos located at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLN2AKOcYr7lutGJB-UfDKtQPF_o_249m

or click here:  **YouTube**

MassDEP is sending this important drinking water information to all PWS responsible persons who are listed on the state database. If you are no longer the correct responsible person for the PWS please reply with the correct contact information. MassDEP needs one responsible contact person from each PWS.

Operators, consultants, and others who are interested in Drinking Water Program updates are encouraged to request to be subscribed to this email list. You may also request to be unsubscribed by replying to this email.

This MassDEP Program Director technical assistance email is funded by the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment (Section 70) Program. The Assessment is paid by all consumers of public water in Massachusetts and is collected by public water systems. For more information about the Assessment Program, go to

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/news/advisory-committees/safe-drinking-water-act-assessment-advisory-committee.html>.
