



Cowlitz County HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1952 9th Avenue
Longview, WA 98632
TEL (360) 414-5599
FAX (360) 425-7531
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health



Volume 1

Group B Public Drinking Water Newsletter

December 2006

Existing System Approval

Existing water systems that never went through the approval process are classified as inadequate systems. In order to be reclassified into the provisionally adequate status a water system is required to have:

- A satisfactory source
- Satisfactory complete inorganic chemical test
- Satisfactory bacteria test
- Minimum pressure of 20 psi under peak usage conditions

If you are unsure about the status of your water system or would like to bring your water system into the provisionally adequate status please contact the health department for more information.

Ongoing Sampling Requirements

All Group B public water systems are required to sample for coliform bacteria annually and nitrates every three years. When taking a water sample be sure to identify on the water sample form the name of the water system, ID# and that it is for a Group B water system.

There are handouts regarding proper sampling procedures available on our website or at our office.

Please contact us if you are unsure about your sampling status.

Water Conservation

With several water systems around the state experiencing water shortages during this last summer including a couple in Cowlitz County. It is a good time to be thinking about what would you do if your water source went dry and it couldn't produce enough water to supply your customers. The following is a list of questions to think about as far as Water Conservation is concerned:

- Do you have a plan do deal with a water shortage?
- Are there leaks in your distribution piping that are wasting water?
- Do you have meters on your system to determine water usage and water loss?
- Have you checked the water level in your well

to see if it has changed over time?

- Do you educate your customers or the other users about water conservation techniques they could use?
- Is there funding to handle a failure with your source?

On the reverse side of this newsletter are excerpts from brochures regarding water saving tips that can be handed out to your customers for educating them on the part they can take in a water conservation program.

There are links to websites on our drinking water section of the website with lots of information and brochures regarding water conservation and tips for around the home.

Dealing with Unsatisfactory Bacteria Samples

When a Coliform Bacteria water sample comes back bad, steps need to be taken to identify the cause of the unsatisfactory sample.

Group B systems are required to take 2 follow-up samples before any disinfection to confirm whether or not the original sample was accurate or whether poor sampling or a contaminated sampling site was the cause.

If any follow-up samples come back unsatisfactory then the users and the health department need to be notified and an inspection of the system will be conducted to identify and eliminate any possible sources of contamination.

After any corrections are made to the water system it should be shock chlorinated, flushed and then follow-up sampling needs to occur to verify corrections. **If any samples indicate fecal coliforms or *E.coli* in the water, please contact the health department immediately for follow-up on the system.**

Cowlitz County Health Department Website

Please note the health department web address is:

www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health

Information for public water systems and water sampling can be found on this website in the Drinking Water and Water Testing sections.

Water Samples

Cowlitz County Group B Water Systems who submit their samples to Cowlitz County Health Department in 2007 will be able to get the sample done at cost pricing:

- Bacteria \$18.00
- Nitrate \$18.00

Program Contact Info

Water Program Lead

Jesse Smith.....360-414-5598
smithj@co.cowlitz.wa.us

Environmental Health Supervisor

Audrey Shaver.....360-414-5592

Environmental Health Office Assistant

Melissa Hilts.....360-414-5583

Health Department Main Line

360-414-5599

Excerpt from The Columbian “Ask The Gardening Experts” Information provided By WSU Extension Clark County

Here are a few facts and some Simple practices that can save water.

- Nearly 14 percent of the water the typical homeowner pays for is never used - it leaks down the drain.
- Water heating accounts for 19% of home energy use.
- Homes with high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances reduce indoor water use by 30% and save on water, sewer and energy bills.

Bathroom:

- Don't run water while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Take short showers, install shutoff valves to turn off the water while soaping or shampooing.
- Never use your toilet as a waste basket.
- Repair all leaks. A leaky toilet can waste

200 gallons per day. To detect leaks in the toilet, add food coloring to the tank water. If the colored water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking.

- Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads.

Kitchen and Laundry:

- Add food wastes to your compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal.
- Wash only full loads of laundry.
- Up to 75% of a home's total water use during the growing season is for outdoor purposes.
- Detect and repair all leaks in irrigations systems.
- Water the lawn or garden during the coolest part of the day (early morning is best). Do not water on windy days.
- Use soaker hoses or trickle irrigation

systems.

- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only, not the street or sidewalk.
- Mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and cut down on weed growth.
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height* longer grass blades help shade each other, reduce evaporation, and inhibit weed growth.
- Minimize or eliminate fertilizing, which promotes new growth needing additional watering.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing them off.
- Wash the car with water from a bucket, or consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- Use automatic shut-off nozzles on hoses.

Excerpt from DOH Brochure on “Irrigation & Landscaping”

Did you know: Gardening professionals agree that most lawns and yards receive more water than they need. Over-watering creates runoff that carries toxic fertilizers and pesticides into our streams. This is not only harmful to wildlife and your plants, it wastes water and money too! The following tips will help protect the environment, keep your yard healthy, and save you money on your water bill.

General

1. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it.
2. Water in the evening or early morning when evaporation is least likely to occur.

Drip irrigation may be used during the day with little water lost from evaporation. Do not water when it is windy.

3. Water only once a week. Weekly watering should be sufficient. Water less often if your plants need less moisture (see Guideline 3 - Lawn Watering).

Irrigation and Sprinklers

1. When landscaping, a properly designed and installed irrigation system should be included as a water conservation tool. Automated irrigation systems offer the ultimate in both control and distribution of water over other watering systems.

2. Keep your sprinkler system in good repair. Fix leaks and adjust the sprinkler heads to eliminate over-spray onto paved areas or buildings. Investigate any source of unusual runoff or puddling.
3. Turn off your sprinkler system at the first sign of saturation or runoff to allow the water to soak in. Water again in an hour or two if needed.
4. Make sure the controller of your automated sprinkler system is properly set to achieve minimum watering levels.

Excerpt from DOH Brochure on “Outdoor Water Conservation

Lawn & Garden

The lawn is getting dry when footprints remain after walking on it.

Water in short repeated intervals for best absorption, especially on slopes or compacted soils. Prevent water runoff from your sprinkler system.

To reduce evaporation, water the lawn in the early morning or evening. Avoid watering during the heat of the day or when it is windy.

Install a trickle or drip irrigation system for a slow, steady supply of water to the plant roots.

Water only when needed. Frequency depends

on plant and soil type.

Water root areas of your plants to establish hardiness.

Low or no-water landscaping requires minimal amounts of water, fertilizer and pesticides. This can save you money and will protect the environment.

Place a 2” to 4” layer of mulch around plants and trees to avoid excess evaporation.

Use native and adapted plants when landscaping your yard. These plants usually require less care and water. Consider installing plants that don't require water once they are estab-

lished for some or all of your yard.

If your lawn is healthy, consider letting your lawn grow dormant in the summer. It will turn green again when it rains.

Cleaning

Use a broom to clean walkways and driveways. Do not use the hose. Watering the sidewalk, gutter and street wastes water.

Clean gutters and downspouts manually instead of hosing them down.

Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle along with a bucket of soapy water to wash the car.