

Joliet Alternative Water Source Study

Topic #6: How water is regulated

March 7, 2019

There are several ways that drinking water is regulated. While water quality is primarily regulated at a federal level through USEPA, there are several state agencies which have authority for drinking water from initial construction through ongoing operations. The following is a listing of agencies that regulate drinking water, along with what components each agency regulates:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA): USEPA has drinking water regulations for more than 90 contaminants (<https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations>). The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) includes a process that USEPA uses to identify new contaminants to regulate in drinking water to protect public health. Existing Water Quality Standards were discussed in Educational Topic #3 - Water Quality Standards, distributed December 2018.
- State Established Contaminant Regulations: For some contaminants, states, via legislation, might decide to regulate a contaminant at a more stringent level than required by USEPA or regulate a contaminant that is not regulated by USEPA.
 - California has several Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) that are more stringent than the SDWA levels. The following link shows a comparison between the California MCLs and the USEPA MCLs: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/documents/ccr/MCLsEPAsDWP-2018-10-02.pdf.
 - Illinois has only recently dipped their toes into further regulation associated with the Lead and Copper Rule with Senate Bill 550 (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/99/099-0922.htm>) which requires Lead Testing in Schools and Licensed Day Cares.
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA): IEPA is the regulatory authority for community public water supplies (more than 25 people served) in Illinois (such as the City of Joliet). IEPA is responsible for the permitting of new drinking water facilities/components as well as verifying compliance by community public water supplies.
 - In addition to the water quality standards established by the USEPA, standards for the design, construction and operation of drinking water systems are established in the Title 35 Illinois Administrative Code, Subtitle F Public Water Supplies (<https://pcb.illinois.gov/SLR/IPCBandIEPAEnvironmentalRegulationsTitle35>).
 - Additional standards include the Recommended Standards for Waterworks (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/tenstates/waterrev2012.pdf>) (also called the Ten States Standards) and Water and Sewer Main Construction in Illinois

https://www.illinoisengineer.com/IllinoisEngineer/Shop/Standard_Specs/IllinoisEngineer/Standard_Specs.aspx?hkey=c4977607-324f-4653-8e8d-206faf260738).

- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH): IDPH is the regulatory authority for non-community public water supplies in Illinois as well as building plumbing (including licensing of plumbers).
 - IDPH utilizes the Illinois Plumbing Code (<http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pdf/SOS%20Official%20Version%20Part%20890%20Plumbing%20Code%20A5%20Paper%206%2018%2014.pdf>) as the construction standard for building plumbing.
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources: IDNR is the regulatory authority for issuing Lake Michigan Allocation permits as well as river intake construction permits.
 - Information on the Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program can be found at: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/WaterResources/Pages/LakeMichiganWaterAllocation.aspx>
 - Information on permits for water withdrawal is noted at: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/WaterResources/Pages/WaterSupply.aspx>

As you can see, there are several ways that drinking water is regulated in Illinois. In some cases, multiple regulatory agencies are involved. Such is the case with a new river or lake intake where permitting approval is required from both IEPA and IDNR. All of these regulations are being done in an effort to protect public health.

In a future educational topic (August 2019), we will discuss how emerging contaminants are regulated.