



## Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Drinking Water Program

### **Proper Care of Bottled Water and Dispensers for Schools**

For the highest quality and best tasting water, water coolers must have a routine cooler sanitizing and maintenance program. Such a program could include initial sanitizing of the coolers and continued cleaning/maintenance of the coolers. The program should include the following:

- Designating a bottled water coordinator with defined responsibilities,
- Identifying each bottled water cooler with an ID number,
- Maintaining a maintenance log on each bottled water unit,
- Specifying time frame for changing any filters,
- Specifying monitoring sampling frequency,
- Defining procedures to set up a new cooler, and
- Defining care and storage procedures for bottled water and bottled water dispensing units.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) strongly recommends that all bottled water used in schools in Massachusetts be approved/permitted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

#### **Care of Full Bottles**

- Store the full bottles at a constant temperature and, if possible, in a cool area.
- Store the bottles away from sunlight to discourage the growth of algae.
- Make sure the bottle inventory is rotated in a way that assures the “oldest bottle” is used first.
- Wash hands before changing a water bottle.
- Wipe the top and neck of the new bottle with a clean sterile cloth.

#### **Cleaning Water Dispensers**

For the highest quality and best tasting water, follow this simple process every 1 to 3 months or when you change your bottle:

- Unplug your cooler. Remove the empty bottle and drain any remaining water.
- Dilute 1 teaspoon of non-perfumed bleach in 1 gallon of water. Dampen a clean cloth (not paper towel) in the mixture and wipe down the inside of the cooler reservoir. Wipe the spigots. Rinse the reservoir with at least 1 gallon of clean water. Drain this water through the cold-water spigot. Discard the bleach solution.
- Place a new bottle of water on the cooler. Plug the cooler into the outlet.

Also remember, the drip tray should be emptied and cleaned periodically because it isn't a drain, but a tray to catch the occasional spill.