



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

100 Cambridge Street Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114 • 617-292-5500

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Bonnie Heiple
Commissioner

Please forward this notice to the person who is responsible for paying the bills for your public water system.

October 1, 2024

RE: Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment for Fiscal Year 2026 (to be billed in December 2025)

Dear Public Water Supplier:

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) recognizes the hard work that Public Water Systems (PWS) put forth to provide safe and fit drinking water to the public. MassDEP makes every effort to support PWS in addressing routine issues as well as the increased demands posed by new and emerging challenges.

Assessment Background

To fund its work, MassDEP relies on critical funding through federal and state sources. As you are aware, section 18A of Chapter 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws directs MassDEP, after consultation with the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), to establish and revise a federal Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment to assist the department in providing technical compliance assistance to and otherwise to regulate all suppliers of water. The Assessment, paid annually by all consumers of public water, is collected by PWS and sent to MassDEP to help fund the Commonwealth's work to provide a safe and fit supply of public drinking water to all consumers. The Advisory Committee submits an Annual Report to the Massachusetts Legislature that includes a summary of work conducted by MassDEP with Assessment funding. A copy of the summary is enclosed with this letter. The Annual Report for 2023, as well as information about the Committee, is available at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/safe-drinking-water-act-assessment-advisory-committee-section-70committee>.

FY 2026 Assessment Rate Structure

Following the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, MassDEP has established the same rate structure for FY26 as for FY25.

- \$9.50 per million gallons of water used by PWS with meters;
- Minimum bill for metered PWS is \$50;
- Flat rate of \$50 for unmetered PWS serving up to 101;
- Flat rate of \$100 for unmetered PWS serving 101 through 200;
- Flat rate of \$250 for unmetered PWS serving 201 through 899; and
- Unmetered PWS serving 900 or more pay a rate based on an average water use.

This information is available in alternate format. Please contact Melixza Esenyie at 617-626-1282.
TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370
MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

Printed on Recycled Paper

How Will the FY2026 Assessment be Billed?

The bills for FY26 will be mailed to all PWS in December 2025 and are based on water use reported by PWS on the Annual Statistical Report for 2023. The bills that you receive in December 2024 are for the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment for FY25. The FY25 bill is based on water use reported by PWS on the Annual Statistical Report for calendar year 2022.

How Will Assessment Revenue be Used?

The Assessment helps support MassDEP's implementation of over 50 federal Safe Drinking Water Act programs and allows MassDEP's Drinking Water Program to provide no-cost technical and compliance assistance and training to PWS. Training topics are determined based on needs articulated by PWS and/or by surveying deficiencies identified during sanitary surveys. No-cost Training Contact Hours (TCHs) to maintain state drinking water operator licenses are provided.

In addition to providing training support, more contact with PWS will result in increased awareness about updates to SDWA programs, emerging contaminants, and lessons learned across the industry. Other important efforts include:

- Water quality monitoring waiver program;
- On-site technical assistance for PWS for day-to-day issues, as well as for PFAS and emerging issues;
- Lead & Copper Rule revisions, Lead and Copper Rule Inventories;
- Consumer Confidence Report Rule;
- Water System Restructuring Assessment Rule;
- More funding for PWS infrastructure;
- Cybersecurity, emergency response and resiliency planning; and
- Preparation for new and emerging regulations.

A summary of efforts supported by MassDEP's Drinking Water Program, and included in the Annual Report to the Legislature, is attached to this letter.

Thank you for the support that you have shown to MassDEP's Drinking Water Program over the past year as we pursue our shared responsibility of protecting public health. Please contact us at program.director-dwp@mass.gov if you have any questions about the Assessment or other public drinking water topics.

Sincerely,



Yvette DePeiza, Program Director
Drinking Water Program, MassDEP

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTED BY THE
SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT ASSESSMENT
January 1 through December 31, 2023



Protect Public Health through Compliance Review

- Reviewing a new three-year (2023-2025) cycle of the Water Quality Monitoring Waiver Program.
 - Public Water Systems (PWS) submitting a waiver application (2020-2022): 334 at 866 sources of drinking water. Monitoring waiver applications submitted by compound: Inorganics 785; Perchlorate 785; Synthetic organics 753; Volatile organics 675.
 - This program saved consumers \$4,712,914 in water quality monitoring costs for the last cycle (2020-2022).
 - Massachusetts PFAS Waivers were not offered this compliance period as EPA is promulgating a new national PFAS rule.
- Approved watershed protection programs for 29 reservoirs with disinfection log credit.
- Approved watershed protection programs for 7 reservoirs with filtration waivers at 4 public water systems.
- Maintained incentives for developing local wellhead and surface water protection plans.
- Conducted 12 wellhead protection reviews and compliance updates for new sources.
- Reviewed 2 proposed easements for compliance with Zone I regulations.
- Reviewed 2 proposed conservation restrictions to protect hundreds of acres of land for drinking water supplies.
- Reviewed over 300 monitoring waiver applications for wellhead and surface water compliance criteria.
- Reviewed and ranked 8 Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program applications.
- Registered 17 new Public Water Systems (PWS).
- Registered 4 existing Public Water Systems (PWS) that were previously unregulated.
- Worked on 78 new source approvals for public water sources.
- Reviewed and approved Cross Connection Control Plans for 6 non-community PWS.
- Issued 375 Cross Connection Surveyors/Testers Certificates.
- Reviewed and approved 6 new technologies for use with drinking water.
- Entered 4 permit applications into MassDEP's permit management system.
- Conducted 1 CCCP audit – Cambridge Water Dept. - 10/11/2023
- Conducted 438 sanitary surveys which included technical and compliance assistance.
- Conducted inspections at 6 public surface water systems that have waivers from filtration.
- Held regular coordination meetings with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and the EPA - conducted compliance reviews, evaluated water quality reports and trends.
- Conducted regular meetings of the DWP Drinking Water Filtration/Treatment Committee.
- Conducted 139 Capacity Reviews for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund applicants.
- Reviewed 4 Water Supply Business Plans during the New Source Approval process.

- Assisted the Mass. Dept. of Public Health at water bottlers and ice makers' facilities.



Save Money for Consumers with Compliance Assistance

- Supported technical assistance to K-12 schools, early education and care facilities, Boards of Health, Plumbing Inspectors, PWS and the public on lead and copper in drinking water.
- Continued to implement the Wellhead Protection Program to provide compliance and technical assistance. Assisted 32 municipalities or PWS with wellhead protection issues.
- Field verified 4 watershed and/or tributary delineations for reservoirs and updated Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps.
- Completed 66 hydrogeologic reviews for the MassDEP.
- Continued technical support of the bulk upload tool for laboratories to submit drinking water quality sampling results on-line. Provided support for easy-to-use macro enabled Word form template to assist small labs without LIMS in uploading bacteria data to eDEP.
- Provided compliance assistance for Statistical Reporting, Ground Water under the Influence, Consumer Confidence, Cross Connection, Certified Operator and Source Water Protection.
- Captured the 14th year of electronic Annual Statistical Reporting (e-ASR).
- Continued improving the e-ASR for the next reporting year.
- Provided over 400 instances of Source Water Protection technical assistance.
- Continued sending biweekly Program Director emails to PWS with regulatory reminders, trainings, etc., and separate emails with timely info about the Lead & Copper Rule, Lead in School Drinking Water, Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and grant opportunities.
- Maintained an on-line template for PWS to use for Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) compliance, updated support materials and emailed CCR reminder e-postcards.
- Notified new community water systems of CCR requirements for 2023.
- Reviewed 513 CCRs, provided Technical Assistance Reports and tracked CCR compliance.
- Posted sample schedules, Lead and Copper Approved Sampling Sites Plan, Certificates of Registration for all PWS, and water quality reports, i.e., CCRs, for Transient, Non-Community (TNC) and Non-Transient, Non-Community (NTNC) PWS.
- Continued to offer free training programs for small system operators using EPA funding.
- Continued the implementation of the Capacity Development Program which provides financial, managerial, and technical assistance to small PWS.
- Reviewed the technical, financial, and managerial operations of 167 community and non-transient non-community and 82 transient non-community PWS.
- Reviewed Underground Injection Control (UIC) registration applications.
- Assisted Boards of Health on private and public drinking water and geothermal wells issues.
- Responded to requests from PWS regarding the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 5 (UCMR5) Program and provided compliance assistance.
- Helped PWS write watershed protection plans & local water supply bylaws.
- Submitted the Annual Operator Certification Report to the U.S. EPA.
- Gave Boards of Health one-on-one assistance with well drilling requirements.
- Assisted well drillers at two-day New England Water Well Association Exposition.
- The implementation work for 90 PWS under the Long Term 2 (LT2) Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule has been completed for all schedules (1-4).
- Identified 615 technical, financial, and managerial deficiencies during sanitary surveys.



Support Public Water Suppliers with Technical Assistance and Training

- Conducted a regional BOH presentation on how BOHs can assist the DWP protect small and large public wells
- Distributed fact sheets, guidance documents, and other technical assistance materials.
- Continued to improve web pages for access by PWS, town officials, the public and others.
- Provided materials for statewide Board of Health workshops as requested.
- Prepared biennial mailing to all Boards of Health to support their role in protecting drinking water and to update them on drinking water issues.
- Delivered Drinking Water Program presentations to regional water works organizations.
- Worked with the Office of the State Geologist and United States Geological Survey (USGS) on geological studies relative to ground water.
- Presented 40 excellence in compliance awards and 21 nominated awards during 2023 for calendar year 2022.
- The Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities approved 88 training courses. This is a short list of new topics.
 - Introduction to Water Treatment
 - Asset Management & Data Integration
 - Major Changes in the Lead and Copper Rule
 - Cybersecurity Basics for Drinking Water
- The Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities approved 680 license applications.
- The Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities revised its training policy to incorporate asynchronous trainings.
- Provided assistance on improving cybersecurity hygiene of PWS
 - 81 PWS registered (and 42 completed to-date) for free EPA free cybersecurity assessments.
 - Collaborated with CISA Region 1 to provide free in-person cybersecurity assessments to 9 PWS
 - Conducted free cybersecurity trainings on basic cybersecurity, ransomware, and incident response
- Provided instructors for 6 NEWWA Backflow Tester and Cross Connection Survey classes.
- Provided 1 instructor for NEWWA Hydrogeology/Source Approval classes.
- Provided 1 instructor for the Mass. Health Officers' Association regional conferences.
- Provided technical assistance on CCCP to PWSs, 352 by e-mails and 78 by phone.
- Maintained online training videos for PWS at <https://goo.gl/Xhw4br>.
- Maintained a Drinking Water Program Training Calendar with information on courses and conferences from MassDEP and other sources. PWS and others can download the calendar and receive automatic updates.
- Provided expertise to MassDEP's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup and Title 5 and Groundwater Discharge programs for consistency with Drinking Water Program regulations.
- Provided expertise to the USGS Climate Response Network.
- Collaborated with the USGS to measure monthly water level readings throughout the state.

- Provided speakers and operator training on Mass. drinking water topics at local and regional water works events and for the Massachusetts Rural Water Association.
- Continued to collaborate with the Mass. Department of Public Health (DPH) on the Lead Contamination Control Act, fluoridation and other topics.
- Provided help with writing capital improvement plans to 125 PWS during sanitary surveys.
- Updated records and added wells totaling 2,211 new entries in the Well Driller database.
- Provided technical assistance and instructors to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission's (NEIWPCC) Soil Evaluator Course.
- Continued to provide expertise to the National Science Foundation Drinking Water Technology Review Section.



Participate on Committees that Bring Massachusetts Interests to State, Regional and National Levels

MassDEP staff participated in meetings and events of the following committees, organizations, and other state, regional and national entities: 495/MetroWest Partnership, NEIWPCC Emerging Contaminants Workgroup, NEIWPCC Chloride Contamination Joint Workgroup, New England WARN, Massachusetts Water Works Association, Massachusetts Municipal Association, Conservation Law Foundation, New England Communications Collaborative; Association of State Drinking Water Administrators; ASDWA PFAS workgroup, ASDWA LCRR/LCRI workgroups; State Vegetation Management Panel; State Pesticide Board; Office of the State Geologist State Map Advisory Committee; NEWWA Source Water Advisory Group, Groundwater Advisory Committee, Groundwater Resource Initiative, Drinking Water Operators Certification Committee, Board of Certification of Backflow Prevention & Cross Connection Control, Management & Finance; Multi-Agency Task Force on Schools; National Drinking Water Advisory Council Small Systems Implementation Work Group; MassDEP Laboratory Advisory Committee; NEIWPCC Source Water Protection Work Group; Ground Water Protection Council's Source Water Protection Work Group; Well Driller Program Technical Advisory Committee; American Water Works Association Fluoride Standards Committee. Participated on EPA work groups for Emergency Preparedness, Data Management/SDWIS Modernization, Lead and Copper Rule, Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, PFAS, and the Ground Water Rule.



Provide Support to Safe Drinking Water Act Advisory Committees

MassDEP staff schedule, support and participate in meetings of the Safe Drinking Water Act Advisory Committee (SDWAAC) and the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment (Section 70) Advisory Committee.

The SDWAAC meets quarterly and provides knowledge and advice to the DWP about Safe Drinking Water Act topics and priorities. Members include PWS, water works associations, laboratories and public health agencies and organizations.

The Section 70 Committee holds quarterly public meetings per MGL Chapter 21A, section 18A to monitor and provide advice to DWP on the Massachusetts Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment Program and to submit an Annual Report to the Massachusetts legislature. See

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/safe-drinking-water-act-assessment-advisory-committee-section-70-committee> for public meeting dates and agendas, Annual Report to the Legislature and a list of Committee members.