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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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Bureau Of Resource Protection
Division Of Water Supply (DEP/BRP/DWS) Policy 88-14
Secondary Standards Exceedances
(Year 2000 Printing)

Effective Date: 10-8-96

Policy, SOP or Guideline # 88-14

Program Applicability

Supersedes Policy, SOP or Guidance #:

Approved by: Arleen O'Donnell

Background and Rationale

This policy is adopted to provide the DWS with a consistent method of utilizing secondary standards. Secondary standards are promulgated by the EPA as maximum contaminant levels which are considered to be protective of the public welfare. When these secondary standards are exceeded water quality can be aesthetically displeasing to consumers. Exceedance of these standards may also result in consumers seeking alternative supplies that may or may not be adequately regulated. By consumers utilizing alternative supplies, an exceedance of an aesthetic secondary standard can lead to a public health concern. This policy will allow DWS to provide information to existing systems in response to consumer complaints as well as minimize the number of new systems that exceed the EPA's SMCLs.

Policy

Existing Situation: If an SMCL exceedance in an existing system is identified by a consumer complaint and supported by the Massachusetts or EPA certified laboratory analysis, DWS will notify the system via the attached standard notice. This notice will inform the Public Water System of the exceedance, explain why secondary standards are important, and request that action be undertaken to correct the problem. DWS may also request public notification if it would help in allaying the fears of the consumers.

New Source Approval Situation: SMCL exceedances found during a new source approval should result in a requirement for treatment or disapproval depending on the concentration. This requirement may encourage proponents to seek alternative sources. If treatment is the option chosen, an adequate maintenance budget and certified staff must be identified.

Adopted: 10-8-96
Effective: 10-8-96
Date: 10-8-96

Arleene O'Donnell, Assistant Commissioner

ATTACHMENT 1

Dear Public Water Supplier:

The Department of Environmental Protection, (DEP) Drinking Water Program's records indicate that your supply exceeded the EPA's secondary standard for _____ within your distribution system. EPA's and DEP's secondary standards are aesthetic standards that are set to protect the public welfare. However, when these standards are exceeded, many consumers turn to alternative supplies which may or may not be adequately regulated. By Consumers utilizing alternative supplies of unknown quality, an exceedance of a Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) can lead to a public health concern.

The Department under the provision of M.G.L. Chapter III Section 160A, and 310 CMR 22.07D(3) requires the following action to be taken by your water system to address the above mentioned problem:

- By _____ inform the DEP in writing at the above address what action you are (Date) taking to address these concerns.
- Use the attached public information brochure to educate your consumers about this problem.

Please call _____ if you have any questions on this subject.

Very truly yours,

Regional Director
Department of Environmental Protection