



# COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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[www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health)

## Board of County Commissioners

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Volume 6

## THE WATER FLOWS

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### Program Contact Info

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### Water Sampling Technique

When taking bacteria samples it is always important that proper technique is used to prevent unsatisfactory samples caused by sampling error. Below is brief reminder of some basic water sampling guidance.

1. Choose a good sample faucet (remember to avoid leaky faucets, swivel faucets, single lever hot/cold faucets) Ideally choosing a faucet without threading but sanitizing the faucet if threaded.
2. Remove any aerators, screens, washers, hoses or other attachments from the faucet.
3. Use cold water only and flush faucet for at least 5 minutes. Then turn water down to a stream about the width of a pencil.
4. Now grabbing the water sample bottle unscrew the lid without touching the inside of the lid or the top of the bottle. Do not set the cap down or allow anything to touch the inside of the cap or the rim of the bottle.
5. Hold the bottle under the stream and fill to the neck of the bottle or the indicated fill line without overfilling.

**Water Samples required for Group B water systems are as follows:**

**Bacteria—Annually     Nitrate—Every Three Years**

### Group B Rule Revision

This a reminder that the Group B Rule Revision process is still ongoing and is still expected to be finished with new rules in place by the end of 2012. At the time of writing this article no changes have come to our attention regarding the Group B rule revision process at this point. The current draft rules are available on the Washington State Department of Health website at: [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/groupb.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/groupb.htm)

This is a brief summary of draft rule changes that were listed on the last newsletter, more details can be found at the website listed above:

- Added intent of rules is to focus on design and construction of systems
- Added language about local boards of health adopting local rules
- Added section that 2 or less connection systems are exempt from rules except for certain regulated facilities and if the local board of health adopts rules for 2 or less connection systems
- Added some language altering what type of new systems require an engineer to design the system
- Added multiple requirements for development of new water systems including source requirements, water quality requirements, design standards
- Lowers the arsenic maximum contami-

nant level from 50ppb to 10ppb for new systems or existing unapproved systems (previously approved systems would be grandfathered)

- Removes ongoing monitoring requirements unless local rules are adopted by the local board of health.
- Existing system approval section has been altered to have the following requirements
  - Source needs to meet well construction standards (WAC 173-160)
  - No source of contamination in the sanitary control area that could cause a public health risk
  - Meets all water quality standards (including the new arsenic standard at 10ppb)
  - Capable of meeting 20psi throughout distribution system during peak demands
- Customer notification time reduced to 24 hours for when an e coli positive sample or other acute threat or incident has occurred.

**Please note the rules are still being revised and are subject to change based on feedback they have received from community forums or written comments.**

### We Have Moved

The Health Department moved from 1952 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Longview to 900 Ocean Beach, Longview (which previously housed Washington State Labor and Industries).

The Health Department mailing address and main phone lines will remain the same. If you need to contact Environmental Health Staff please call the main phone number at 360-414-5599.

Please visit our webpage for more detailed contact information.



## Water Sample Labs

Below is a list of the certified labs in the local area providing drinking water sample testing for your required water quality. It is recommended that you call ahead for pricing, instructions and schedules. A complete list of state certified labs can be found on the Dept. of Ecology webpage at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/search.html>

Lab Name	Address	Phone Number
Addy Lab	2517 East Evergreen Blvd, Vancouver	360-750-0055
Additional Collection Sites	1220 Ocean Beach Highway, Longview	360-414-0336
Haase Watch and Clock Repair	1365 Lewis River Road, Woodland	360-225-9478
Woodland Hi-School Pharmacy		
Columbia Analytical	1317 S. 13th St, Kelso	360-577-7222
Additional Collection Site		
Dale Mcghee & Sons Well Drilling	3032 Allen St, Kelso	360-423-8493
Lewis County Health Department	360 NW North St, Chehalis	360-740-1237

### System Depressurization

When a system depressurizes whether from shutting down sections of the water system to replace piping, losing power or having a water main break there is potential for bacteria or other contaminants to enter the water supply.

Contaminants can enter the water supply through a process called backflow where normal water flow is reversed due to back siphonage or back pressure.

The most common potential location where backflow can occur is from a standard garden hose, such as if a hose was submerged in a pool or bucket. Other common residential backflow locations include inground irrigation systems and leaking pipes. Backflow preventers are available for protecting water supplies from backflow occurrences.

Potential indications of backflow include discolored or unusual looking water or if there are taste and odor issues with water.

#### Actions To Take Following Pressure Loss

1. **Determine cause of problem and restore water. May want to issue a health advisory as a precaution (see article to right).**
2. **Flushing the water lines to reduce risk and help clean system if any contaminants may have entered.**
3. **Disinfect the system. Notify customers prior to any-time the system will be disinfected.**
4. **Collect bacteria sample(s) after system is returned to normal to check water quality.**
5. **If you have reason to suspect backflow into the system then notify health department and all users. Note that it may not be obvious that backflow occurred.**

### Notifications

Notifying customers when situations arise that can compromise the health of the users is a key to proper operation of a water system. Issues that can arise that might justify notifying the users includes planned or unplanned water outages, adding chlorine to the system, unsatisfactory water samples or if the water system facilities have been vandalized.

As a public water supplier, you are required by law to prepare and distribute public notification to consumers anytime there is a coliform or chemical MCL violation.

It is very important that any notification be done in a timely manner to give the consumers options for protecting their own health. If you are planning to shut off the water for repairs or chlorinating the system it is wise to give plenty of notice to the users. In situations of emergency the notification should be given to all the users ASAP and at least within 24 hours.

Any notification should include what the issue is, what is being done about the issue and when the issue is likely to be resolved.

Example Health Advisory Notifications are available from the health dept. or on the Washington State Department of Health website at [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)

### Generator Usage

If during a power outage you wish to connect a generator to the water system or your homes electrical system then you need to make sure you have a properly installed transfer switch. Transfer switches are required to prevent charging power lines and potentially electrocuting utility workers and other people. For this reason any installation of a transfer switch needs to be installed under an electrical permit with L&I. A handout is linked on the our drinking water webpage regarding transfer switches or you can find info at L&I's webpage: [www.lni.wa.gov](http://www.lni.wa.gov)