

INFORMATION COLLECTION RULE FEDERAL DATABASE

The Information Collection Rule (ICR) Federal Database is designed to help EPA develop new regulations under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

WHAT IS THE INFORMATION COLLECTION RULE?

The Information Collection Rule is an effort by EPA to collect and analyze data to study the risk/risk tradeoff involved in disinfecting drinking water. Public water systems use disinfectants to remove bacteria, viruses, and protozoa in the water. However, disinfectants (such as chlorine) can react with the natural organic content of the water to form byproducts which may pose a risk of cancer. Additional information is needed to accurately assess the health risks of this tradeoff. The Information Collection Rule (ICR) will produce a database to provide EPA with information on the occurrence in drinking water of 1) disinfection byproducts or DBPs, and, 2) disease-causing microorganisms (pathogens), including *Cryptosporidium*. EPA will use the information collected by this rule and in this database along with current research to determine whether revisions need to be made to EPA's current drinking water filtration and disinfection rule and to determine the need for new regulations for disinfectants and disinfection byproducts.

This is a collaborative effort involving not only EPA and the water utility industry, but also state and local officials, environmentalists, and consumer advocates.

WHAT DATA ARE BEING COLLECTED?

Approximately 300 large utilities must collect data on the presence and levels of microbial contaminants and disinfection byproducts in their drinking water as well as on the effectiveness of different treatment technologies to reduce these levels. This includes monitoring for bacteria, viruses, and protozoa over an 18 month period, as well as measuring the levels of organic materials in water that react with disinfectants to form byproducts, the level of disinfectants, and the level of disinfection byproducts. This 18 month monitoring began in July 1997.

The ICR Federal Database will be used to collect data that will be used in future regulation development, specifically the Long Term Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule and Phase 2 of the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproduct Rule. The data being collected are based upon the negotiated agreement between industry and EPA and are anticipated to provide a superior quality of data than that previously available.

IS MY WATER SYSTEM A PART OF THIS TESTING?

Water systems that get their water from surface water sources such as lakes and rivers and serve at least 100,000 people must participate. Additionally, water systems that rely on ground water as the source of their drinking water and serve at least 50,000 people must participate.

WHEN WILL ICR INFORMATION BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC?

EPA will collect and analyze the information and share it with the public and interested stakeholders for the development of future rulemaking. This information will begin to be available beginning in late 1998. The data will be used in the next regulation negotiation process, which will begin in mid-1999.