



March Madness isn't just about basketball!

UCMR Update
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 Technical Support Center
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UCMR Monitoring Begins!

UCMR Update Issue Number 2- This information sheet, the **UCMR Update**, is the second one to be issued by the Technical Support Center (TSC) of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW). Future issues will be distributed as needed to maintain information flow related to the UCMR.

Editor's Note: UCMR monitoring got off to a good start in January for both large and small systems. For the small systems, our implementation contractor, GLEC, contacted the systems that were scheduled for January 2001 and shipped the sampling kits to them. In some cases the plant personnel collected the samples, but several states have agreed to collect the samples for the selected small systems within their states. Over 200 sampling kits were received in January by the laboratories that are analyzing the small system samples. More on this in the **Small Systems Come Through in a Big Way** article.

I am very pleased with the number of requests that I have received from public water systems and laboratories to be placed on the mailing list for the UCMR Update. Initially the Update was sent to the systems that U.S. EPA notified directly and to states that would be doing their own notification. They, in turn, mailed copies to their systems (we hope). In the future, however, we will **only be sending the Update to those folks who have requested to continue receiving it**. Use the registration form on the last page to keep receiving future issues of the UCMR Update, if you haven't already registered.

In this second issue of the UCMR Update, we will look at the Large System Screening Survey, and update Data Reporting. I have selected these topics because they will all be important in the coming months.

Finally, don't forget to check out the **Rumor Mill** section for the latest gossip related to the UCMR. Here's a little tease. Guess which editor of this rag will probably be retired from EPA by the time you read this. (*Never fear, a new editor will be found!*)

Small Systems Come Through in a Big Way!

- Small systems scheduled to sample in January were shipped kits from GLEC in December 2000 or January 2001. Generally, they plan to ship the kits one week before the scheduled sampling event. If you need/want your kit any earlier, please make arrangements with Robin Silva-Wilkinson of GLEC [PHN: (231) 941-2230]. In January, 122 Assessment Monitoring kits were expected to be collected for the Environmental Health Laboratory (EHL) located in the Midwest and 120 kits were received back (filled with water, I hope!) by the lab. This represents a whopping 98% return rate. Sixty-four Screening Survey kits were shipped in January with 61 received by the lab (95%).



Meanwhile, out on the Left Coast, Assessment Monitoring kits were shipped by our contractor, GLEC, to small systems that will be using Montgomery Watson (MW) the West Coast contract lab. One hundred and seven kits were expected to be collected in January and 102 of those kits were received by the lab (95%). As for the Screening Survey, 52 kits were shipped and all 52 have been received (100%) by the end of January.

Overall, 229 Assessment Monitoring kits were expected to be collected and 222 have been received (97%). One hundred and sixteen Screening Survey kits were expected to be collected and 113 have been received (97%) by the end of January.

A few of the common sampling problems noted by the labs included items such as bottles not completely filled (excessive head space), caps over tightened leading to cracks in the caps (and leaks), bottles not replaced in the proper boxes after sampling, etc. These types of problems lead to the need for resampling, so try to be careful and follow the sampling instructions to the letter.

EPA would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the support that we have received from both the PWS and state personnel collecting samples in the field. We could not have successfully completed this important sampling effort without your assistance! Thank you all!

Ohio Creeks Are Still Frozen, but UCMR Data is Flowing

- Not only has the sampling begun, so has the reporting of data. EPA's contract labs (the one's analyzing the small system samples) have reported their first batches of data to TSC. After quality control (QC) checks are performed on the data, TSC will turn the data over to GLEC so that they can inform the PWSs of the results of the chemical analyses. Systems can expect to get a hard copy of their results from GLEC about two months after the samples were collected.

Two-In-One Screening Surveys?

- As you read the UCMR rule you might not recognize that there are actually 2 screening surveys which will be undertaken in this UCMR monitoring cycle (2001-2005). The first Screening Survey only covers the chemical contaminants (which have methods specified in the rule) in Table 1, List 2. This Screening Survey for chemical contaminants will be broken down into 2 phases. During the **first phase** in 2001, only **180 selected small systems** (a subset of the 800 selected for Assessment Monitoring) will collect samples for the Screening Survey. During the **second phase** in 2002, only the **120 selected large systems** will collect samples for the Screening Survey. Small system monitoring for List 2 chemical contaminants is taking place **before** the large systems monitor for these contaminants because EPA is paying for the small system monitoring and hopes to allow additional time to establish commercial laboratory capacity and experience with the methods before the large systems start their monitoring. It also permits PWSs to get analytical contracts in place to perform these analyses.

The second Screening Survey only includes the microbiological contaminant, *Aeromonas* and will take place in 2003 for **both** a group of 180 small systems (a separate subset of the 800) and a different set of 120 selected large systems. Any given system (whether large or small) will only participate in one Screening Survey. Therefore, no PWS will be required to sample for both the chemical contaminants and *Aeromonas*.

What About *Aeromonas*? - Over the last few months TSC and ORD-NERL worked with 7 utilities (8 plants) with a variety of treatment types who monitored for *Aeromonas* in their distribution systems (42 sites), several times a month. This monitoring was done to help determine how well the new **draft** method works and if *Aeromonas* can be expected to be found when UCMR monitoring begins. *Aeromonas* was detected at two utilities.

Under the UCMR, selected systems must arrange for the testing for *Aeromonas* in 2003, using the method which is yet to be approved, by a laboratory which is both certified under §141.28 for compliance analysis for coliform indicator bacteria (using an EPA approved membrane filtration procedure) and which also has been granted approval for UCMR monitoring of *Aeromonas* by successfully passing the *Aeromonas* Performance Testing (PT) Program administered by EPA. This *Aeromonas* Performance Testing Program is expected to begin in late 2001 or early 2002.

Don't Forget Index Systems - Remember, Index Systems are the 30 randomly selected small systems that will be monitored over a five-year period for a wide range of parameters. GLEC, our UCMR implementation contractor, started visiting some of these systems in January (nine, to be exact) to gather the additional operating parameters associated with small systems. Also recall that the purpose of this sampling program is to study the effect of temporal variation on contaminant occurrence and to provide additional information on small systems which can then be used to "tailor future regulations to small systems." So, if you are an Index System, expect to see one of the GLEC folks on your doorstep in the near future.

Moron Screening Survey Monitoring Frequency - Sorry, that's "more on" Screening Survey Monitoring Frequency. Large surface water systems selected for the List 2 Screening Survey of the chemical contaminants will sample during 2002 (small systems during 2001) in each of **four consecutive quarters** choosing **either** the first, second, or third month within that quarter and **consistently** sampling in that same month (1st, 2nd, or 3rd month of the quarter) while ensuring that one of those sampling events occurs during the vulnerable time (i.e., May, June, or July). Large ground water systems selected for the List 2 Screening Survey of the chemical contaminants will sample just **twice** in 2002 (small systems during 2001) with one sample collection during the vulnerable time (May - July) and the second five to seven months earlier or later. What could be easier?

All large **and** small systems selected for the Screening Survey of the List 2 microbiological contaminant *Aeromonas*, will monitor **six times** in 2003, collecting in each of the months of July, August, and September and also consistently choosing either the first, second, or third month of the other three quarters to round out the sampling.

Data Reporting II - Analytical data from the UCMR monitoring will be entered into a web-based data entry system known as **SDWARS** (for **S**afe **D**rinking **W**ater **A**ccession and **R**eview **S**ystem). *Note: In the last issue of the UCMR Update the full name of the **SDWARS** data entry system was inadvertently referred to as the *Safe Drinking Water Acquisition and Reporting System* - sorry, (but I still like my version better).* This database system is currently under development and although there have been a few setbacks it is still anticipated that it will be ready to accept data in July 2001. In

the interim, it will be necessary for you to participate in a registration process. Letters were mailed to large systems and laboratories early in March announcing the start of registration and explaining the procedures to be followed. Briefly, the registration process involves the following process: 1) starting in March use the Internet to access the CDX registration web page and enter your Customer Retrieval Key (in notification letter); 2) Review the point of contact information for accuracy and modify as needed; 3) verify the accuracy of the information and modify as needed; 4) select your unique user name and password; and 5) after registering online, prepare a “sponsor” authorization letter on your organization’s letterhead to activate your account. For PWSs, once you register you will be able to review your PWS’s Facility and Sampling Point information (as provided by your state regulatory agency).

Just the Fact (Sheets), Ma’am... -In the first UCMR Update a couple of EPA documents were described that were due to be released to help operators of large and small systems deal with the UCMR. Now another document, *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Integrated Guidance Document*, EPA 815-R-01-XXX currently in draft form is undergoing review and should be released in another month or so. This document will provide a general overview of the UCMR program, including a description of how PWSs, states, and the EPA are affected by this regulation, and the responsibilities each party has in implementing the UCMR.

Have you been reading *Federal Register* UCMR rule language late at night as a cure for insomnia? While this may be an effective treatment, we have prepared fact sheets which are abbreviated versions of the “mother” document. The four new fact sheets just released are (drum roll, please), *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Monitoring for List 1 Contaminants by Large Public Water Systems*, EPA # 815-F-01-003, and *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Monitoring for List 1 Contaminants by Small Public Water Systems*, EPA 815-F-01-004. Both of these fact sheets provide a brief overview of the PWS’s responsibilities in implementing the **Assessment Monitoring** portion of the UCMR. The other two fact sheets, *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Screening Surveys for List 2 Contaminants by Selected Large Public Water Systems*, EPA 815-F-01-005 and *Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation: Screening Surveys for List 2 Contaminants by Selected Small Public Water Systems*, EPA 815-F-01-006 provide a brief overview of a system’s responsibilities in implementing the **Screening Survey** portion of the UCMR for large and small public water systems, respectively. Finally, another document dealing with monitoring by index systems is slated for release sometime in March.

The documents listed above (with complete document numbers) are available by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791, or by viewing it on EPA’s Internet Homepage for the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) at www.epa.gov/safewater/ucmr.html, then **click on Rule and Guidance**.

List 2 Rule Finally Final - The final rule for List 2 was published in the *Federal Register* (66 *FR* 2273) on January 11, 2001. This means that the Rule is finally final and effective on January 11, 2001. The full title is: **Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation for Public Water Systems; Analytical Methods for List 2 Contaminants; Clarifications to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation** (catchy title, huh?). Basically, the rule approves the analytical methods for 13 chemical contaminants on List 2, and requires monitoring for those contaminants at selected systems. The rule also sets the schedule for monitoring *Aeromonas*, a microbiological contaminant, contingent on promulgation of its analytical method. The rule is now available on the web for your reading pleasure at www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-WATER/2001/January/Day-11/w59 or, www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/ucmr_list2

Rumor Mill - Road Shows Planned ?- EPA is planning to have 5 “road shows” sometime in the May - June time frame. The 1½ day training sessions may/will take place in 5 of the 10 EPA Regional Offices. One day will be geared toward laboratories and teaching them how to use the **SDWARS** system (data reporting requirement for the UCMR). The next morning will be for PWSs wanting to learn more about the UCMR and what it means to them. Keep your eyes and ears open for the specific places and times.

2001 Monitoring on Hold? - Another rumor floating around out there (that was recently brought to our attention by a commercial lab) is that, “List 1 monitoring may be dropped for 2001 because the EPA electronic data base is not yet operational.” This is so untrue! Yes, the data system is not yet ready for prime time, but the List 2 Rule (remember, the one with the catchy title) makes an exception to the provision that results must be reported within 30 days following the month in which you received the results from the laboratory. The exception is that “reporting of monitoring results to EPA received by public water systems prior to June 30, 2001, must occur between July 1 and September 30, 2001.” (see p. 2300 of the rule) Large systems are busy collecting UCMR samples as you read this, some even started collecting samples in December of last year. Bottom line, don’t believe everything you hear (or read), pick up those samples! We’ll keep working on the data system.

...and more rumors... - We have recently heard concerns and false rumors that we have changed the approved method list and the associated MRLs in some covert attempt to minimize competition between commercial drinking water analytical labs. NOT SO!! How do these rumors start? The only UCMR rule that has recently been published with content specific to approved analytical methods and MRLs was the January 11, 2001 publication of the List 2 Rule (66 FR 2273). In this rule, the approved methods for the Screening Survey List 2 contaminants are listed along with the associated MRLs. This List 2 specific information had previously been identified as “Reserved.”

Nothing covert is going on with lab approval for these List 2 methods, actually it is based upon existing certification in specific compliance monitoring methods. Selected List 2 systems must arrange for the testing of the chemical contaminants identified in List 2 by a laboratory certified under §141.28 for compliance analysis using:

- EPA Method 525.2 if the lab is performing UCMR analysis using EPA Methods 526 or 528
- EPA Methods 549.1 or 549.2 if performing UCMR analysis using EPA Method 532.

And Finally, Relief on the Horizon? - EPA has recently received calls from several large ground water systems requesting interpretation of the UCMR rule (that’s a surprise) and requesting guidance about sampling requirements when they have multiple wells, which are all drawing from the same representative source water aquifer. When systems manifold the sources as a homogenous mix, treat the blended water, and introduce the treated water at one entry point to the distribution system (EPTDS), sampling should be done at that EPTDS location. Other ground water systems, however, separately treat at the well (or provide no treatment) and have multiple EPTDS representative of each well head. Many of these ground water systems with multiple EPTDS have made the case that since several of the wells within their system are representative of the **same source water** well field, monitoring at all these sites is a significant cost burden and would require the submission of multiple analysis records for the same sample matrix, thereby biasing the database. EPA does not believe that the rule requires this kind of over sampling and is formulating guidance to address this issue.

Once Again - In any written correspondence with the UCMR folks here at TSC, utilities, please use your PWSID Number (**2 letter state postal code followed by 7 digits**, e.g., ST9999999) as a

reference. Laboratories use your USEPA (EMSL) LAB ID number (**2 letter state postal code followed by 5 digits**, e.g., ST12345) for lab related issues. The address is:

UCMR Coordinator
Technical Support Center
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
26 W. Martin Luther King Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45268

Future Issues - Thanks to all of you who sent in request forms so you could be added to the UCMR Update mailing list. In the future, **the UCMR Update will only be sent to those people who have requested to be added to the mailing list** (and to those systems that TSC notified directly). So please complete and send in the form below (if you have not already done so). If you prefer, you may e-mail a short message with the information requested below to branson.phyllis@epa.gov to be placed on the mailing list. Please indicate if you want an **e-mail copy or a hard copy**. Thank you.

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