



TSC hopes that you had a Happy Thanksgiving and that your turkeys were flavorful, your time with family was enjoyable, and your couch was soft for the after dinner nap.

The UCMR UPDATE

Issue 5

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The Turkey, Stuffing, and “Humble” Pie Issue

UMCR Update Issue Number 5- This information sheet, **The UCMR Update**, is the fifth 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 Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation (UCMR for those of you who may have forgotten).

Editor’s Note: As you all know, the past month featured the Thanksgiving holiday. Before we rush head on into the end-of-year holidays, EPA would like to reflect on the holiday that just occurred. In addition to eating turkey, watching football, and falling asleep on the couch, this holiday is a time to give thanks for the people that have played important roles in one’s life. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, EPA would like to offer thanks to all the water systems, laboratories, state employees, and contractors who have played an integral role in the implementation of the UCMR. This is truly a co-operative effort and a large undertaking that could not be accomplished without the help of all the dedicated people out there. EPA has enjoyed working with all of you thus far and hopes to continue that excellent co-operation as we head into the homestretch of this UCMR cycle. Again, thank you all. Now, the fun. This issue features information on the following:

1. The EPA Reminder Letter for List 1 monitoring requirements
2. SDWARS quirks and contact information
3. The *Aeromonas* Reporting Approach

I. The Great Reminder Letter Misunderstanding of 2002

During late September/early October, many PWSs received letters from EPA reminding them of their Assessment Monitoring (List 1) requirements under the UCMR. These letters were sent to all systems that did not appear to have reported any data to the Safe Drinking Water Accession and Review System (SDWARS), as of September 6th. This letter seems to have inspired more anger, fear, and confusion than any event since Orson Welles read *War of the Worlds* over the radio. As in the Welles instance, the reality of this situation was very much misinterpreted. This was only a REMINDER letter. It was not a VIOLATION letter. No one has been fined and no one is going to jail (except for maybe me if I don’t pay that parking ticket). It was meant to prevent any PWSs from being out of compliance at the end of 2003 by reminding them that they had yet to submit any data to SDWARS. EPA apologizes to anyone who misunderstood the

intent of the letter. As a rule, EPA would much rather help people be in compliance with regulations than pursue them with fines and other punishments.

Now, I know some of you are out there may be saying “(Fill in a suitable swear word here), I sent my sample to the lab and they’ve already posted the results for me!”

While it may be true that your lab has posted your results, they cannot officially report UCMR data, unless they are designated as a PWS representative. EPA wants to remind you that the PWS must review and **approve** data posted by a lab, unless written consent has been given to the lab to officially act on behalf of the PWS and approve data. This requires a PWS sponsor letter, signed by the PWS official representative, specifying an individual lab by their Central Data Exchange (CDX) User I.D. as the approving official for the PWS. EPA cannot use any data in SDWARS until it has been approved by the PWS.

In closing then, EPA apologizes for any confusion and looks forward to continuing the strong co-operative working relationship that has thus far been displayed throughout this UCMR cycle.

II. Disappearing Data

Some PWSs have complained that their data have seemed to vanish, simply disappearing from SDWARS faster than the retirement savings in my IRA. Don’t worry! While not lost, the data can disappear from a PWS’s view after a period of time. This occurs when a state enters SDWARS and marks the data received. I know that some PWSs have expressed concerns that when they go to look for old data that they know had been posted and approved, it is no longer visible. If you have record of previously approving results, you can rest assured that the data have been stored in the database. You may wonder, “Why was this system set up this way?” SDWARS was developed as a temporary reporting system used to “access and review” monitoring results, not to permanently store all the information. These data will be stored as a separate, final database set and will be publicly accessible through the Internet. In addition, concerns over the volume of data some users would continually “view” when conducting a search prompted EPA to establish this type of system. However, to document your approval of these data, EPA recommends that you print your results, using your browser print function, after you have designated them as “approved”. To do this, repeat the same search used to generate the data table that included results with a status of “PWS Hold” which have just been approved, and print that table. You will notice immediately after you have approved data and repeat the search, you no longer have access to the “Status” field, since they are now approved for final submission to EPA and the State, but you can still view these results. Print this and keep this with your official compliance records for UCMR. Following EPA and State review, these results will be posted publicly on the Web at: www.epa.gov/safewater/data/ucmrgetdata.html.

Who you Gonna Call?

If there’s something wrong...with CDX or SDWARS. Who ya gonna call? **Ghostbusters?** Well, maybe that’s not such a bad idea, with data disappearing like **Slimier** through a wall. All SDWARS related questions should be directed to the SDWARS Help Desk (1-888-890-1995). If the Help Desk is not able to address all your

concerns, please contact the Infrastructure Branch (IB), the group responsible for SDWARS oversight. The contact person is Roger Howard at (202) 564-9907.

III. *Aeromonas* Systems

The following section applies only to those systems that have been selected to participate in List 2b-*Aeromonas* monitoring. The rest of you may skip to Section 4, unless you really can't get enough of the Update. In that case, read on!

***Aeromonas* Rule(s)!!**

The long awaited *Aeromonas* Rule has been signed and published. It is now available and should keep the appetite sated of those who waited in anticipation for a new piece of environmental legislation to chew on. The EPA Administrator signed the rule on October 18, 2002. This news may elicit yawns from some, but trust me, this is BIG! First of all, it means that EPA Method 1605 has been officially approved for the measurement of *Aeromonas*. It also kicks off the beginning of a final *Aeromonas* Proficiency Test (PT) study. As you may recall from the last issue, any laboratory that wants to participate in the analysis of *Aeromonas* samples for the UCMR must pass an EPA PT for Method 1605 (http://www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/aeromonas_pt.htm).

Remember, only large PWSs selected for *Aeromonas* monitoring are required to establish analytical contract support for this monitoring from an EPA approved *Aeromonas* laboratory. If your system is depending on a regularly contracted laboratory to pass this last PT, please be aware that approximately 50% of labs have failed on their first attempt to pass a PT study. As there will be no further PT's administered after December 2002 we suggest that you have a backup plan in the event that the lab that you intend to contract with does not pass. A list of laboratories that have already been approved for *Aeromonas* testing under the UCMR is available on the Web at (<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/aprvlabs.html>).

***Aeromonas* Reporting Approach**

Large Systems

On November 1st, EPA sent out data collection sheets to all large PWSs that are required to sample for *Aeromonas*. These arrived in the form of e-mails to those systems for which EPA has an e-mail address, and by U.S. mail to those systems that have not established an e-mail address with EPA. Please note that you **WILL NOT** be reporting *Aeromonas* results electronically via SDWARS. The system was not designed to handle *Aeromonas* data. Besides, we didn't want to infect SDWARS with "bugs" anyway.

The e-mail (and U.S. mail for that matter) that PWSs received should contain 9 attachments: An *Aeromonas* reporting standard operating procedure (SOP), a reporting Technical Assistance (TA), an *Aeromonas* Fact Sheet, and six Microsoft ExcelTM spreadsheets corresponding to each month in which the PWS is scheduled to sample. Please make sure that you received the correct data reporting sheets for your PWS. If you have not responded to EPA that you have received the e-mail, please do so as we are tracking the responses to make sure that all sheets were received.

Now for a few notes on how this system is going to work. First of all, in the month prior to your scheduled sampling month, you should receive an e-mail (or letter) reminding you that you are approaching your month to sample for *Aeromonas*. It will also contain the data collection sheet for that month (in case you lost it, your computer crashed, a dog ate it, or you used it to line the bottom of the bird cage). You will then sample at the three locations that you designated as the midpoint, lowest disinfectant residual, and maximum residence time points in your distribution system. Please note that all water quality parameter measurements (temperature, pH, free chlorine and total chlorine) must be **made in the field**, with the single exception of turbidity. Turbidity can be measured in the field or in the lab, within 48 hours of collection. All measurements must be taken by using approved methods as per the SOP and TA sheet. You will then fill out the relevant portion of the spreadsheet.

The samples will then be sent to an EPA-approved *Aeromonas* lab along with the data collection sheet. The samples must remain cold (1° C to 10° C) and need to be sent overnight to the laboratory. Any collected sample must be processed using EPA Method 1605 within 30 hours of the collection time. The lab will test the samples for *Aeromonas*, fill out the relevant portion of the data sheet, and send it back to the PWS for review, approval and final submission to EPA. The next sampling month, you should receive another e-mail (or letter) and the process will repeat itself.

Any system that is currently receiving regular mail notices and would like to receive e-mail notices can contact Cory Wagner at (513) 569-7932.

Small Systems

It's a slightly different ball game for you guys. EPA has contracted with the Great Lakes Environmental Center (GLEC) to assist you with the *Aeromonas* sampling efforts. EPA has also contracted labs that will be performing the analysis for you and reporting the results to EPA.

In December 2002, a step-by-step video of the sampling process will be sent to small PWSs. (I'll bet you can't wait to throw some popcorn in the microwave for that one! What's better than chestnuts roasting on the open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose, and a good old-fashioned sampling video?) Then, in the first month in which you are to sample, you will receive a kit from GLEC with instructions to assist you. This will include sample bottles, U-TEK™ freeze packs and a comprehensive water quality monitoring tool kit (including a nifty hand-held colorimeter to measure free and total chlorine, a pH probe, and a thermometer), a cooler to transport the packs and samples, completed FedEx airbills to the laboratory and sampling instructions. The cooler and water quality parameter kit are yours for the duration of the *Aeromonas* sampling. Please don't lose it or break them. At the end of the sampling period, EPA will be asking for you to return the cooler and kit. (The video is yours to keep in the event that you become nostalgic for the old UCMR Cycle 1 days. Good times, good times.)

The video and instructions will help you to sample and collect the water quality parameters. Should you still have concerns, GLEC can provide on-site support for the first sample month to assist you. This on-site support is a one-time deal though. The next sample month, you will receive a sample kit only, and be expected to proceed from there. Piece of cake!

States, Regions, and Laboratories Participating in *Aeromonas* Monitoring

The participating states, EPA regional offices, and *Aeromonas* laboratories should also have received an e-mail or a letter containing the SOP, the TA, and a sample data collection sheet that represents what the water systems received. This was done to assist those states that are sampling for their affected water systems and to keep all parties in the loop. Any assistance you can provide the water systems, especially the small systems, will be much appreciated.

IV. Important Dates

January 1, 2003:

- Beginning of the final year of Assessment Monitoring under the current UCMR cycle.
- First sample month for Option 1 Large and Small *Aeromonas* systems.

February 1, 2003:

- First sample month for Option 2 Large and Small *Aeromonas* systems.

March 1, 2003:

- First sample month for Option 3 Large and Small *Aeromonas* systems.

V. Contact Information:

A general reminder to laboratories and PWSs: when contacting EPA about UCMR issues, please use your USEPA Lab ID number or PWSID number, respectively.

General UCMR questions may be directed to the **Drinking Water Hotline** at:

1-800-426-4791

Questions regarding registration for or use of the SDWARS/UCMR reporting system may be directed to the **SDWARS Help Desk** at:

1-888-890-1995

Correspondence with TSC may be directed to:

UCMR Coordinator
Technical Support Center (MS-140)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
26 W. Martin Luther King Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45268
Fax: 513-569-7191



Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
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