



“Forget the ICR, Who’s in the Final Four!”

- Adolph Rupp

ICR Update

Jim Walasek, Editor
 Technical Support Center
 March 1998

March Madness Reigns!

ICR Update Issue Number 10 - This information sheet, the **ICR Update**, is the tenth 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 ICR.

Editor’s Note: The last issue of the **ICR Update** had a brief mention about the **A-Team** (under T.S. Technical Assistance) being an excellent resource “at least until April ‘98.” I now have some additional information about the A-Team. They will be wrapping up their activities on April 30, 1998. After that date questions should be directed to the **Safe Drinking Water Hotline** (800-426-4791). A message will be left on the A-Team number (800-200-0984) for about a month after they cease operations (steering folks to the SDW Hotline). Thanks for all the support, “Mr. M” and the rest of the A-Team. We couldn’t have done it without you!

Chemistry PE Study Results - Laboratories that are approved to perform disinfection byproduct (DBP) and/or surrogate (TOC, UV, Br, and TOX) analyses for the ICR must successfully participate in six quarterly PE studies. The third of the six “required” PE studies (designated PE 6) was completed at the end of January and overall, laboratories were very successful in the study. The success rate for the laboratories ranged from a low of 90 % passing on the chloral hydrate sample to a high of 98% passing on the UV sample. Even with this outstanding performance, 65 of the 207 laboratories were unsuccessful in analyzing one or more of the PE samples for a **method/analyte group** for which they were approved. These labs were sent a make-up sample (PE 6M) in February for each failed sample and they were given 2 weeks to report their analytical results back to EPA. The results from the PE 6M study were mailed/faxed back to the labs on March 6. Unfortunately, 16 laboratories were still not successful in PE 6M and they lost their approval for the failed method/analyte group effective March 9. A revised approval report has been posted on the Internet and at the Hotline reflecting these latest changes in lab approval. Please check with your laboratory to be sure it didn’t have difficulties with the latest round of PE studies. Thanks.

Where's my data? - We sometimes receive calls requesting the analytical results for analyses performed by EPA's laboratory. Our goal is to report analytical results back to the Utility ICR Technical Contact, within 45 days of the end of the sampling month. Please contact Dave Munch (513-569-7843) if you are missing data for samples collected earlier than this. Be sure to tell him the first 3 digits of the sample ID numbers (treatment plant identification number) and the sampling period in question. With that information in hand, he can tell you to whom the report was sent and when. If necessary, a new report can be mailed or faxed.

Frequently the caller isn't the person we have listed in our files as the Utility ICR Technical Contact. Before calling us we request that you first contact your utility's Technical Contact. We **ONLY** send the data reports to the Utility ICR Technical Contact and we depend upon that person to pass the information along to the data entry person.

We try hard to keep our records current, so if your Technical Contact or mailing address has changed, please be sure to inform us via Fax at 513-569-7191. That will help ensure that our data reports reach you in a timely manner. Thanks, guys.

Calibration Solutions - Chemistry labs, please remember that the calibration solutions that are sent to you from the Technical Support Center are strictly for ICR use. We only have a **limited supply** and to make them last until the end of ICR sample collection they must only be used in generating data for the ICR. **Any questions?** Thanks for your understanding in this matter.

Do we know how you reported your coliform data? -

The answer is **yes**, but it might not be obvious. When utilities enter their coliform data, they have to choose one of two screens, either the *Multiple Tube Fermentation Technique* screen or the *Membrane Filter Technique* screen. However, when you see the **F.5 - Microbials - Monthly Analyte Results Matrix** report of your data, the headings indicate that all the results are in colonies/100mL. These are the units for the membrane filter technique. Multiple tube fermentation technique results should be reported in MPN/100mL. In actuality, the type of method used is saved in the database, but for simplicity's sake, all the coliform data are reported under one heading. When you begin to receive the **VU9** reports from the Federal Database, which are comparable to your **F.5** reports, you will see that the units for total coliforms, fecal coliform and *E. coli* have been changed to **density/100mL** to obviate the confusion about the different units.

In the event that a laboratory analyzed fecal coliform or *E. coli* by a different method than total coliforms, the data entry screen will allow the utility to enter data into the two different screens but it will submit only the data you entered last. If your laboratory analyzed *E. Coli* or fecal coliform by a different method than total coliforms, please enter the data into the screen for the method used for total coliforms. Add a comment to indicate what method was used for fecal coliforms or *E. Coli*.

Not designed for a LAN - As stated in the ICR Laboratory Quality Control (QC) Database System Users' Guide, the ICR Laboratory QC Database System was not designed to run on a Local Area Network (LAN). The software is **not** a multi-user system, therefore, **do not** install it on a LAN. Instead, install the application directly on your hard drive according to the directions on page 12 of the Users' Guide.

EPA "Special" Sampling - As we approach the end of the last month of the third quarter of ICR sampling, we want to applaud the ICR samplers for the excellent job they have done collecting and shipping the ICR EPA "special" samples. We have received 96% of the low-level bromate, aldehydes, and cyanogen chloride samples "**unbroken and cold**" on the day following the sample collection. This success is no doubt due to the **conscientious effort** of dedicated ICR samplers. Without your effort, the loss would surely be greater.

For those of you who have experienced **some sample breakage**, we are increasing the overall size of the sample kit and adding additional packing to avoid future breakage. If you feel the need to add additional packing material, please feel free to add extra "bubble pack" or contact us and we will be happy to add additional bubble pack to your next kit.

Remember, sampling kits are sent approximately **one week before** your scheduled sampling date. If you do not receive your sampling kit by Wednesday of the week **prior** to the sampling date, please call us. We have made "special" arrangements with a few plants to send their kits earlier than one week prior to sampling. If necessary, we are willing to make special arrangements with you if there are difficulties with the current procedure.

As part of our quality assurance plan, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Water Quality Laboratory in Arvada, Colorado is analyzing duplicate samples for 10% of the total aldehyde and CNCL samples collected. Therefore, we are asking each plant to collect a **second set of samples, one time only**, during the 18 month ICR sampling period for this purpose. However, before we send any additional sample bottles, we will contact each sampler to obtain consent. Of course, you have the right to decline if you feel the additional sample collection poses a burden. Once permission is obtained, we will send two sampling kits for each plant (one week prior to the scheduled **quarterly** sampling date). The EPA kit is identified by a "white on blue" EPA sticker and carries the sample bottles to be returned to the EPA. The USGS sample kit is identified with a "white on gold" USGS label. This kit contains the USGS sample bottles and a **Federal Express** air bill to cover the cost of shipping to the USGS. We sincerely appreciate your cooperation and extra effort.

Although the ICR provides for a three-day sampling window, plants using ozone, chlorine dioxide or chloramine have a **specific scheduled date** to collect the EPA special samples. We understand, of course, that occasional, unforeseen circumstances may force you to sample on a day other than your scheduled sampling day. Therefore, if you cannot sample on your specific date please call or FAX (513-569-7191) us and we will reschedule your plant.

Based on the information the ICR Utility Contacts provided to us prior to the start of the 18-month monitoring period, we are aware of several ICR plants that were not using ozone, chlorine dioxide or chloramine during 1997 but intend to use one of the special disinfectants sometime this year. We scheduled a sampling date for each of these plants for low level bromate, aldehyde and/or CNCL analyses and we mailed a calendar to the person responsible for receiving the sampling kit. Check your calendars to be sure these EPA special samples have been scheduled. If your plant is not identified on your calendar, or you forgot to tell us you would be using one of the alternate disinfectants, you must contact us immediately to schedule a sampling date. (If you have misplaced your calendar, we will be happy to send you another.) In order to maintain a manageable flow of samples to our laboratory, samples must be collected on the scheduled sampling date. Remember, any sample collected on an **unscheduled date** runs the **risk** of not being analyzed.

Problems concerning sample collection, address changes, scheduling/rescheduling, or disinfectant changes which will result in different sampling requirements should be directed to EPA Sample Coordination. Please send us a FAX or letter detailing these changes so we can incorporate the changes into our procedure. If your plant is not using one of the special disinfectants during your scheduled sampling date or you already know which months the disinfectant will be offline, please send us this information in a FAX or letter. We **depend on you** to keep us current with the activities of your plant.

Finally, EPA Sample Coordination often receives questions unrelated to the EPA Special Samples and we do our best to pass them along to the appropriate persons. But to obtain answers more quickly, Fax (513-569-7191) your questions to one of the TSC folks listed below:

- Analytical results from the EPA Analyses - David Munch
- Requests for calibration solutions - Edward Glick
- Chemistry Performance Evaluation Studies - Charles Feldmann
- Treatment Studies - Steve Allgeier
- Sampling requirements for all utilities - Jim Walasek
- EPA Special Sampling Coordination - Bonnie Newport, Christy Frietch, Dan Mossburger* - personnel change
- Laboratory approval: Chemistry - R. Kent Sorrell
Protozoa or Virus - Mary Ann Feige
Coliform - Lois Shadix

Participants have been selected! - EPA now has identified the 70 utilities who will participate in the **ICR Laboratory Spiking Study**. Letters were sent to 210 randomly selected ICR utilities inquiring about their interest in participating. The overwhelming majority of replies were **YES**. Letters and calls have since gone out confirming the 70 participants. Follow-up packages will be sent to participating utilities by mid-March 1998. This package will contain all information needed to implement the program, including sample collection procedures, schedule for collection, shipping information, and contacts.



Analyst scanning for *crypto* oocysts

Letters have also been sent thanking those who were interested, but not selected. If your utility was not contacted, but you might have been interested, we regret having to limit the study, and hope that you would be willing to work with us on other projects in the future.

The ICR Lab Spiking Program will begin for a portion of the 70 ICR utilities in April 1998. A **reminder**: participating utilities will sample at one of their plants (identified by EPA), on only two ICR protozoan sample collection dates (dates will be provided in the follow-up package). Sampling materials will be shipped to utilities several days in advance of the ICR collection date.

If you have any questions please contact the Lab Spiking Program Project Leader, **Heather Shank-Givens** at 202-260-0063 or Email at givens.heather@epa.gov. Information about the ICR Supplemental Surveys will be provided in upcoming **ICR Updates**.

United States
Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (MS-140)
Cincinnati, OH 45268

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use
\$300

EPA 815-N-98-001b

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
EPA
PERMIT No G-35
