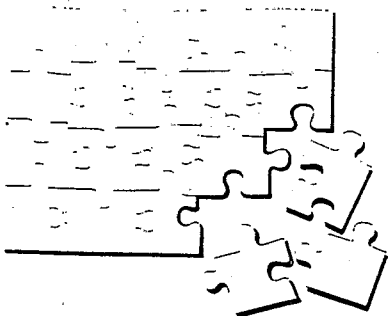


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The Pieces are Starting to Fit Together.

ICR Update
Jim Walasek, Editor
Technical Support Center
August 1998

Data Validation Underway!

ICR Update Issue Number 13 - This information sheet, the **ICR Update**, is the thirteenth 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: Last month I mentioned that everything in the ICR was getting to be pretty routine with the exception of data validation by EPA, but now I'm happy to report that even data validation is **starting to fit together**. I'm sure when you started collecting and analyzing ICR samples over a year ago (time flies when you're having fun) there were "bugs" that needed to be worked out, so it was with the data validation program. Now we're to the point where we have most of the bugs corrected and can begin dealing with the backlog of data. Thanks again for your patience and understanding.

Deadline Extended - By now, ICR utilities have probably received their first set of ICR validation reports. The cover letter that accompanied the validation report package (dated August 6, 1998) stated a deadline date of August 31, 1998 for **resubmitting** a July 1997 monthly data diskette. However, since the report package was delayed an additional week in getting to the utilities, the deadline for resubmission has been extended to **Wednesday, September 9, 1998**.

Utility "Help" Package on the Way - ICR utilities should have also received a "help" package about the same time as their first data validation package (for the first month of ICR sampling, July 1997). The ICR validation report package contains: a "checksum" report for July 1997, and VA1 and VU reports also for July 1997. The **help** package is a set of materials which includes: a brief description of the validation reports, "hints" for reviewing the VA1 report (plus an example VA1 report with explanatory notes), and a list of validation reject reasons which may appear on the VA1 report along with a brief explanation for each reason.

The checksum report that you received indicates that your diskette was received and successfully uploaded to the ICR Federal database (ICRFED). The set of VA1 reports (called the Monthly Analyte Results Failed by EPA) are generated for each laboratory to which you sent samples which had QC failures. The VU reports (Monthly Sampling Verification Report) have the same format as the series "B" and "F" reports that are printed by your ICR Water Utility Data System. The only exception is that QC failures indicated in the VA1 reports appear (as an "R") in the VU5 through VU10 reports. These reports are used to review the accuracy of the information in the ICRFED. If after reviewing these reports you find that you need to make corrections to your database, please submit a corrected diskette for July 1997 by the new deadline of September 9, 1998. Thanks and good luck!

Monthly Operational Data - When inputting the monthly operational data on the Edit Treatment Plant screen be sure to enter the **Percent Solids in Sludge** as a percent value and not as a decimal. (First select the Treatment Plants button on the Monthly Sampling menu, then select plant and click the button labeled "Basic Plant Information".) For example, if the percent solids in the sludge is 2 percent, enter it as 2.00 on the data input screen. This may be a non-problem, but I wanted to clarify it so if it had been entered improperly it could be corrected in time for resubmission. Thanks.

ICR Data Analysis Update - A Joint Application Design (JAD) meeting was held (June 15 - 17, 1998) in Washington, DC. The objective of the meeting was to finalize the design of the Primary Auxiliary database (Auxiliary 1) that will house the ICR data to be extracted from ICRFED. The meeting was a follow-up to a series of Joint Requirement Planning (JRP) meetings that defined all the requirements for this database. Another JAD meeting for the design of the other auxiliary databases and the query tool is planned for August 17 - 19, 1998.

A beta test planning meeting took place at the AWWA headquarters in Denver on July 16 - 17, 1998. The beta test is a quality assurance step in the data extraction effort. The objectives of the meeting were to plan for testing the Auxiliary 1 database after its completion. The participants of the meeting identified the elements that would need to be tested to ensure that the data extraction from ICRFED proceeded according to the specified requirements. The participants also identified the need for different testers. Some would have the background knowledge of the JRPs and JAD, others from the technical workgroups who are not as familiar with the design, and utility participation. A significant contribution to the beta test is based on utility participation, similar to the utility involvement in the beta test for the Utility Software that took place in 1995.

Planning for actual data analysis by the technical workgroups is also underway. The analysis will start once the uploaded validated data is extracted into Auxiliary 1 data base, following its beta testing. We will keep you informed of the progress of this part of the ICR in future ICR Updates.

AMWA Offers ICR Data Release Handbook - In the coming months, many water supply agencies that have been collecting data for the Information Collection Rule (ICR) will be interested in providing their consumers with the results of monitoring data prior to the release of such data by EPA or third-parties. According to Diane VanDe Hei, Executive Director of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) a nonprofit organization made up of the nation's largest drinking water suppliers, releasing the data early allows agencies to explain to their own consumers what the data means. Earlier this year, AMWA members gathered in Tampa to develop a step-by-step strategy for water utilities to use in releasing their data. The strategy is accompanied by other useful tools, such as:

- a sample press release
- cautionary language for consumers,
- consumer fact sheets on every contaminant covered by the ICR rule,
- CDC/EPA *Guidance for People with Severely Weakened Immune Systems*,
- a Partnership For Safe Water fact sheet, and
- a summary of the ICR for the public.

Water utilities interested in obtaining a copy of the Strategy may e-mail Diane VanDe Hei at vandehei@amwa-water.org, or call Eugenia Cadena at 202/331-2820.

Reporting ICR Treatment Study Results - As described in the ICR Treatment Studies Data Collection Spreadsheets User's Guide, the results from your ICR treatment study must be reported in the Data Collection Spreadsheets and a Summary Report. Together, these two items constitute the *Final Treatment Study Report*. When submitting the Final Treatment Study Report to EPA, it is necessary to include hard copies and electronic copies of both the Data Collection Spreadsheets and the Summary Report. Please be sure to include **two (2) hard-copies** of both the spreadsheets and the Summary Report. The corresponding electronic files can be submitted on standard 3.5" floppy diskettes or on zip diskettes. If 3.5" floppy diskettes are used, it will be necessary to compress the files using PKZIP software.

The electronic format for the Data Collection Spreadsheets is standardized (i.e., MS Excel, and in some cases Lotus); however, the electronic format for the Summary Report is not specified. This provides flexibility with respect to the software applications that can be used to generate the Summary Report. Although you are free to use any software application, we do request that you limit the number of files that comprise your Summary Report. For example, if the text of the document is in MS Word, tables are in MS Excel, and graphics are in MS Power Point, it is very easy to merge all of these files into a single MS Word file.

EPA plans to convert all Summary Report files to a *Portable Document Format (PDF)*, which can be viewed using a standard Acrobat Reader. By submitting the smallest number of files possible, you will facilitate the process of converting all Treatment Study Summary Reports to a standard electronic format. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this effort.

Nothing to Report? - During the course of a treatment study, there will be times when it will be impossible to report a numeric value for a sample, e.g., if the result is below the minimum reporting level. The ICR Treatment Studies Data Collection Spreadsheets User's Guide lists three situations in which it is necessary to enter codes instead of values: below the minimum reporting level (BMRL); not analyzed (NA); and not reported (NR). The *ICR Treatment Studies Data Collection Spreadsheets* treats alpha characters as "no data entry" and ignores these entries when performing calculations. **Example:** Assuming the following data are entered into the spreadsheet, 1, 2, 3, BMRL, and NA, the spreadsheet will calculate the average as 2 and the sum as 6.

The spreadsheets also calculate THM4, HAA5 and HAA6 sums automatically. If one or more of the species for THMs or HAAs is reported as **BMRL**, the spreadsheet will treat **BMRL** as "no data entry" (i.e., essentially treating it as zero in the summation) and **correctly** compute the sum. For example, if bromoform is reported as **BMRL**, the spreadsheet will compute a correct sum for THM4. Similarly, if one or more of the individual species was **not analyzed (NA)** or **not reported (NR)**, the spreadsheet will treat these alpha characters as "no data entry" (i.e., essentially treating it as zero in the summation). However, in the case where one or more individual DBP species is reported as **NA** or **NR**, the sum for the corresponding DBP group calculated by the spreadsheet will be incorrect. For example, if CHCl_3 is not reported (**NR**) due to a QC failure, the summation of BDCM, DBCM and CHBr_3 would not be an accurate value for THM4. If an individual DBP species is reported as **NA** or **NR**, then the user should overwrite the equation in the spreadsheet and **report NR for the corresponding DBP sum**.

Reporting Flow and Population Data - In 1996 EPA requested that public water systems report flow and population data for plants subject to the ICR requirements. Plants participating in the ICR Treatment Studies should provide updated (i.e., 1998) flow and population data as part of the Summary Report. A simple table such as that shown below is all that is required.

1998 Annual Average Flows and Population Served for Plant

	Surface Water	Ground Water	Purchased Water	Total
Flow (mgd)				
Population Served				

Spiking Program and Supplemental Surveys - Much work has been done since the last ICR Update to keep things moving in the spiking program and supplemental surveys. Read on for more details.

Spiking Program - The **ICR Lab Spiking Program** is progressing well. More than half of the utilities participating in the program have completed their first sampling event; 51 utilities have

collected water samples for the months of May, June and July. EPA has received data summary reports for samples analyzed in the month of May. The spiking program will end at the close of the ICR 18-month monitoring in December 1998. Thanks to all lab spiking program participants.

Method 1622 - The **round-robin validation** process for Method 1622 has resumed for *Cryptosporidium* only. The process was halted due to technical issues concerning a decrease in the recovery rates. Due to deficiencies in the Dynal IMS procedure and the Gelman capsule filters, the average recovery of the method was significantly lower during the round-robin validation than the recoveries achieved during single laboratory validation studies. These problems have been rectified and things are now back on track. EPA expects that the *Cryptosporidium* validation process will be completed by early October.

The Dynal prototype combined *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* IMS kits are undergoing peer review. Two laboratories have tested the kits in reagent water and are currently testing them in raw water. Once the peer review process is complete the round-robin validation process for the *Giardia* portion of Method 1622 will begin. EPA anticipates having the *Giardia* portion of the method available when surveys begin.

ICR Supplemental Surveys - Recruitment letters for the Large and Medium System Surveys were sent out in early August. So far, quite a number of systems have expressed interest in participating in the surveys. EPA needs 47 large, 40 medium and 40 small plants to collect source water samples twice a month for 12 months (November 1998 through October 1999). Surveys will provide data on protozoa, bacteria, and DBP precursors. **September 4, 1998** is the deadline for submitting reply forms.

Recruitment for the small systems is forthcoming. The comment period for the Information Collection Request for small systems will close on August 24. Recruitment letters are scheduled to be sent out in mid-September.

Details of Method 1622 validation and survey progress, and additional information regarding recruitment will be provided in upcoming issues of the **ICR Update**. If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact Heather Shank-Givens at 202-260-0063 or email to givens.heather@epamail.epa.gov. For questions concerning Method 1622, please contact Crystal Rodgers at 202-260-0676 or email to rodgers.crystal@epamail.epa.gov.

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