

EPA SDWIS/FED

SDWIS/FED (Safe Drinking Water Information System/federal version) is an EPA national database storing routine information about the nation's drinking water. Designed to replace the system known as FRDS (Federal Reporting Data System), SDWIS/FED stores the information EPA needs to monitor approximately 175,000 public water systems.

States supervise the drinking water systems within their jurisdictions to ensure that each public water system meets state and EPA standards for safe drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires states to report drinking water information periodically to EPA; this information is maintained in SDWIS/FED.

WHAT INFORMATION DOES EPA HAVE?

States report the following information to EPA:

- Basic information on each water system, including: name, ID number, number of people served, type of system (year-round or seasonal), and source of water (ground water or surface water)
- Violation information for each water system: whether it has followed established monitoring and reporting schedules, complied with mandated treatment techniques, or violated any Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs)
- Enforcement information: what actions states have taken to ensure that drinking water systems return to compliance if they are in violation of a drinking water regulation
- Sampling results for unregulated contaminants and for regulated contaminants when the monitoring results exceed the MCL

Currently, EPA is in the process of determining additional information states may be required to report in the future, such as the city and county where the system is located (most states already report this information), and the latitude/longitude of the source water intake.

HOW DOES EPA USE THIS INFORMATION?

EPA uses this information to determine if and when it needs to take action against non-compliant systems, oversee state drinking water programs, track contaminant levels, respond to public inquiries, and prepare national reports. EPA also uses this information to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs and regulations, and to determine whether new regulations are needed to further protect public health.

HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS INFORMATION?

You may gain access to SDWIS/FED information through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request or through Envirofacts. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires federal agencies such as EPA to make data available upon request. Through filing a FOIA request, individuals can access the information contained in SDWIS/FED. These requests are processed through EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. There may sometimes be a fee charged for this service. SDWIS/FED information is also available for free through the use of the World Wide Web. The EPA website Envirofacts (http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/sdwis/sdwis_ov.html) makes a sub-set of SDWIS/FED information easily available to anyone with access to the Internet.

