



PROVIDING SAFE DRINKING WATER TO SCHOOLS

The Region's efforts to ensure safe drinking water in schools focus both on schools/daycares that maintain their own drinking water supply and those facilities that are customers of public water systems. Across New England, there are more than one thousand schools and child care facilities that have their own drinking water source and, therefore, are regulated as public water systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). A much larger number of schools and child cares are located in buildings that obtain their water from their community water supplier. In these facilities, the community water system providing the drinking water must comply with SDWA requirements, but the school or child care facility is not regulated.

Showcasing Adopt-a-School Case Studies

Many municipal drinking water suppliers have already reached out to school officials and child care providers in their communities to collaborate on educational programs for children or to help with testing drinking water in schools. These proactive projects are not required by EPA's drinking water regulations. Rather, water system operators have undertaken these efforts because they feel strongly about serving their communities, protecting children's health, and educating the next generation of environmental leaders. The Region, together with EPA's Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water (OGWDW), is highlighting some of these exemplary efforts. Fact sheets and other materials will be developed promoting the experiences of community water systems that have "adopted" their local schools in order to ensure safe drinking water for children.

Educating School Administrators About the Importance of Drinking Water

Region 1 is funding a cooperative agreement to the Vermont Rural Water Association (VRWA) to help bridge the gap in communication and understanding that often lies between school management and water supply officials. Whether a school has its own water supply or obtains its water from a municipal water supply, the program will detail the importance for a sound chain of command and communication between school administrators and water system operators. Efforts will focus on the importance of

understanding and adhering to guidance on operating permits, sanitary survey information, and monitoring schedules. VRWA will also develop reference and handout materials showcasing the essential operational and compliance issues a school administrator should know about the facility's drinking water system. Among other tools, VRWA will distribute EPA's *Are You Providing Safe Drinking Water at your School?* and *Source Protection Tips for Schools that Operate Their own Well Water Systems*; and will reference EPA's Schools and Drinking Water Website. VRWA plans to provide these tools and information to the Vermont School Board Association, Vermont Superintendent's Association, and Vermont Principal's Association on sites visits at schools and at trainings and conferences.

Ensuring Safe Drinking Water at Child Care Facilities - New Hampshire Child Care Initiative and Massachusetts In-Home Daycare Brochure

Under a cooperative agreement, the Regional drinking water program and New Hampshire drinking water program are collaborating on a project that will involve monitoring and education at child care facilities in the state. The project will include distribution of educational materials regarding lead in drinking water and monitoring of approximately 30 facilities. Efforts will be focused on child care facilities that are located in environmental justice areas and where elevated blood lead levels in children have been reported. Outreach and monitoring are anticipated to begin during the spring of 2011.

In a separate effort, the Region is collaborating with the Massachusetts drinking water program to develop educational materials for in-home child care providers. The target audience is child care providers who care for six or fewer children in their own homes. This type of child care is prevalent in urban, environmental justice areas in Massachusetts. Our intention is to provide basic education about lead in drinking water and its sources, explain the importance of flushing and using cold water for cooking and preparation of infant formula, as well as provide information about testing. Development of any materials would also be coordinated with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, which is responsible for licensure of in-home child care providers. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Education will also participate in the review and distribution of the educational material. The brochure will be translated into several languages.

Improving Compliance at Schools that are Public Water Systems

Region 1 is working with state drinking water programs and technical assistance providers to enhance drinking water compliance at New England schools. Currently, the Region is evaluating SDWIS data to identify specific areas and rule requirements where schools might benefit from technical assistance and training. We will share the results of this analysis with state and technical assistance providers to determine whether any targeted training or other assistance to school personnel is warranted.

Enhancing EPA's Webpages

When these various outreach materials and other tools are finalized, the Region will enhance its drinking water webpage to consolidate links to these new tools, as well as previously developed tools for schools. *That Magnificent Ground Water Connection*, groundwater curriculum previously developed by the New England Interstate Control Commission, and EPA's brochure *Are You Providing Safe Drinking Water at Your School?* Are tools already developed and can be located at <http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/drinkwater/pdfs/Drinking-Water-Booklet.pdf>.