



**Determining "Reasonable Potential" for Excursions Above Ambient Criteria Using Effluent Data Only**

EPA recommends finding that a permittee has “reasonable potential” to exceed a receiving water quality standard if it cannot be demonstrated with a high confidence level that the upper bound of the lognormal distribution of effluent concentrations is below the receiving water criteria at specified low-flow conditions.

**Step 1** Determine the number of total observations (“n”) for a particular set of effluent data (concentration or toxic units [TUs]), and determine the highest value from that data set.

**Step 2** Determine the coefficient of variation for the data set. For a data set where  $n < 10$ , the coefficient of variation (CV) is estimated to equal 0.6, or the CV is calculated from data obtained from a discharger. For a data set where  $n > 0$ , the CV is calculate as standard deviation/mean. For less than 10 items of data, the uncertainty in the CV is too large to calculate a standard deviation or mean with sufficient confidence.

**Step 3** Determine the appropriate ratio from the table below.

**Step 4** Multiply the highest value from a data set by the value from the table below. Use this value with the appropriate dilution to project a maximum receiving water concentration (RWC).

**Step 5** Compare the projected maximum RWC to the applicable standard (criteria maximum concentration, criteria continuous concentration [CCC], or reference ambient concentration). EPA recommends that permitting authorities find reasonable potential when the projected RWC is greater than an ambient criterion.