



Fact Sheet: Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule

In the past 30 years, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) has been highly effective in protecting public health and has also evolved to respond to new and emerging threats to safe drinking water. Disinfection of drinking water is one of the major public health advances in the 20th century. One hundred years ago, typhoid and cholera epidemics were common through American cities; disinfection was a major factor in reducing these epidemics.

However, the disinfectants themselves can react with naturally-occurring materials in the water to form byproducts, which may pose health risks. In addition, in the past 10 years, we have learned that there are specific microbial pathogens, such as *Cryptosporidium*, which can cause illness, and are highly resistant to traditional disinfection practices.

Amendments to the SDWA in 1996 require EPA to develop rules to balance the risks between microbial pathogens and disinfection byproducts (DBPs). The Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule and Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule, promulgated in December 1998, were the first phase in a rulemaking strategy required by Congress as part of the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (Stage 2 DBPR) builds upon the Stage 1 DBPR to address higher risk public water systems for protection measures beyond those required for existing regulations.

The Stage 2 DBPR and the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule are the second phase of rules required by Congress. These rules strengthen protection against microbial contaminants, especially *Cryptosporidium*, and at the same time, reduce potential health risks of DBPs.

Questions and Answers

What is the Stage 2 DBPR?

The Stage 2 Disinfection Byproducts Rule will reduce potential cancer and reproductive and developmental health risks from disinfection byproducts (DBPs) in drinking water, which form when disinfectants are used to control microbial pathogens. Over 260 million individuals are exposed to DBPs.

This final rule strengthens public health protection for customers by tightening compliance monitoring requirements for two groups of DBPs, trihalomethanes (TTHM) and haloacetic acids (HAA5). The rule targets systems with the greatest risk and builds incrementally on existing rules. This regulation will reduce DBP exposure and related potential health risks and provide more equitable public health protection.

The Stage 2 DBPR is being promulgated simultaneously with the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule to address concerns about risk tradeoffs between pathogens and DBPs.

What does the rule require?

Under the Stage 2 DBPR, systems will conduct an evaluation of their distribution systems, known as an Initial Distribution System Evaluation (IDSE), to identify the locations with high disinfection byproduct concentrations. These locations will then be used by the systems as the sampling sites for Stage 2 DBPR compliance monitoring.

Compliance with the maximum contaminant levels for two groups of disinfection byproducts (TTHM and HAA5) will be calculated for each monitoring location in the distribution system. This approach, referred to as the locational running annual average (LRAA), differs from current requirements, which determine compliance by calculating the running annual average of samples from all monitoring locations across the system.

The Stage 2 DBPR also requires each system to determine if they have exceeded an operational evaluation level, which is identified using their compliance monitoring results. The operational evaluation level provides an early warning of possible future MCL violations, which allows the system to take proactive steps to remain in compliance. A system that exceeds an operational evaluation level is required to review their operational practices and submit a report to their state that identifies actions that may be taken to mitigate future high DBP levels, particularly those that may jeopardize their compliance with the DBP MCLs.

Who must comply with the rule?

Entities potentially regulated by the Stage 2 DBPR are community and nontransient noncommunity water systems that produce and/or deliver water that is treated with a primary or residual disinfectant other than ultraviolet light.

A community water system (CWS) is a public water system that serves year-round residents of a community, subdivision, or mobile home park that has at least 15 service connections or an average of at least 25 residents.

A nontransient noncommunity water system (NTNCWS) is a water system that serves at least 25 of the same people more than six months of the year, but not as primary residence, such as schools, businesses, and day care facilities.

What are disinfection byproducts (DBPs)?

Disinfectants are an essential element of drinking water treatment because of the barrier they provide against waterborne disease-causing microorganisms. Disinfection byproducts (DBPs) form when disinfectants used to treat drinking water react with naturally occurring materials in the water (e.g., decomposing plant material).

Total trihalomethanes (TTHM - chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and dibromochloromethane) and haloacetic acids (HAA5 - monochloro-, dichloro-, trichloro-, monobromo-, dibromo-) are widely occurring classes of DBPs formed during disinfection with chlorine and chloramine. The amount of trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids in drinking water can change from day to day, depending on the season, water temperature, amount of disinfectant added, the amount of plant material in the water, and a variety of other factors.

Are THMs and HAAs the only disinfection byproducts?

No. The four THMs (TTHM) and five HAAs (HAA5) measured and regulated in the Stage 2 DBPR act as indicators for DBP occurrence. There are many other known DBPs, in addition to the possibility of unidentified DBPs present in disinfected water. THMs and HAAs typically occur at higher levels than other known and unknown DBPs. The presence of TTHM and HAA5 is representative of the occurrence of many other chlorination DBPs; thus, a reduction in the TTHM and HAA5 generally indicates a reduction of DBPs from chlorination.

What are the costs and benefits of the rule?

Quantified benefits estimates for the Stage 2 DBPR are based on reductions in fatal and non-fatal bladder cancer cases. EPA has projected that the rule will prevent approximately 280 bladder cancer cases per year. Of these cases, 26% are estimated to be fatal. Based on bladder cancer alone, the rule is estimated to provide annualized monetized benefit of \$763 million to \$1.5 billion.

The rule applies to approximately 75,000 systems; a small subset of these (about 4%) will be required to make treatment changes. The mean cost of the rule is \$79 million annually. Annual household cost increases in the subset of plants adding treatment are estimated at an average of \$5.53, with 95 percent paying less than \$22.40.

What are the compliance deadlines?

Compliance deadlines are based on the sizes of the public water systems (PWSs). Wholesale and consecutive systems of any size must comply with the requirements of the Stage 2 DBPR on the same schedule as required for the largest system in the combined distribution system (defined as the interconnected distribution system consisting of wholesale systems and consecutive systems that receive finished water). Compliance activities are outlined in the following table.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS	ACTIONS			
	Submit IDSE monitoring plan, system specific study plan, or 40/30 certification	Complete an initial distribution system evaluation (IDSE)	Submit IDSE Report	Begin subpart V (Stage 2) compliance monitoring
CWSs and NTNCWSs serving at least 100,000	October 1, 2006	September 30, 2008	January 1, 2009	April 1, 2012
CWSs and NTNCWSs serving 50,000 - 99,999	April 1, 2007	March 31, 2009	July 1, 2009	October 1, 2012
CWSs and NTNCWSs serving 10,000 - 49,999	October 1, 2007	September 30, 2009	January 1, 2010	October 1, 2013
CWSs serving fewer than 10,000	April 1, 2008	March 31, 2010	July 1, 2010	October 1, 2013
NTNCWSs serving fewer than 10,000	NA	NA	NA	October 1, 2013

*States may grant up to an additional two years for systems making capital improvements.

What technical information will be available on the rule?

The following Guidance Documents will be available:

- Initial Distribution System Evaluation (IDSE) Guidance Manual
- Operational Evaluation Guidance Manual
- Consecutive Systems Guidance Manual
- Small Systems (SBREFA) Guidance Manual
- Simultaneous Compliance Guidance Manual

Where can I find more information about this notice and the Stage 2 DBPR?

For general information on the rule, please visit the EPA Safewater website at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/stage2> or contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. The Safe Drinking Water Hotline is open Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time. For technical inquiries, email stage2mdbp@epa.gov.