

From: Mackey, Chip

Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 10:26 AM

Subject: IMPORTANT GUIDANCE for NH Public Water Systems * COVID-19

Dear Water System Owners and Operators,

We hope you are all well.

It is as important as ever that we assure that the water people are consuming is safe to drink. Especially at this time when many people are stuck at home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19). In that light, we are doing our best to conduct business as usual. We know you have many questions and concerns. In this email, we will try to address some of those issues.

Due to COVID-19, most NHDES staff is now working remotely. We are still working out some of the kinks but, as always, you can reach us via e-mail or by calling. At this point we have some restrictions but we will do our best to get back to you as quickly as possible.

The State of New Hampshire and USEPA have no intention of relaxing sampling schedules. Samples must be taken and results submitted to us as scheduled. One thing that NH is allowing is for water systems to collect bacteria samples in the distribution system at an alternative location in the distribution system. If necessary to avoid going into people's homes or other facilities that are high-risk or unavailable due to the facility being closed. The selected alternative location must be a location that is representative of the water in the distribution system. An alternative location may include an outside tap or other location that is lower risk for the sampler. Extra care and caution for tap cleaning and flushing prior to sampling should be used for any alternative locations. As always, follow-up sampling will be required for all positive bacteria results. At this time, using an alternate bacteria location does not need pre-approval from DES. However, the public water system must provide a clear and concise description of the location where the sample was taken on the sampling analysis request form so that the lab can accurately submit that information to us. We will take it from there.

We have made adjustments to lead and copper sampling schedules that are allowed within the rules. Water systems monitoring lead & copper annually or triennially that were scheduled to sample in the 2nd quarter of this year have been rescheduled to the 3rd quarter of this year. Unfortunately, we cannot do that for everyone, if your system is on semi-annual monitoring you need to sample for lead and copper as currently scheduled.

The State lab has informed us that they are operating normal business hours to support drinking water compliance sampling. And, as far as we know, all of the private labs are also operating. If you have any questions about lab hours or sample drop off procedures, please contact your laboratory directly.

Note: Public water systems, laboratories and their staff are identified as essential businesses under the emergency declaration. If NH goes into a full shutdown, you and your operations will not be affected. We do not anticipate it being a problem but, in case you are challenged, it might be useful to assure all staff have a company ID, business card, or at the very least a copy of this email.

For community water systems, your Consumer Confidence Reports are due as normal. The CCR must be delivered to ALL customers (billing units and/or service connections) and to NHDES by July 1. Click here ([Consumer Confidence Webpage](#)) to access the webpage for info on completing your CCR.

You will receive duplicate information from many different sources. We apologize. The intent is not to overwhelm you but to make sure that everyone gets the information and resources needed to work through this difficult situation. We are working with our technical assistance and training partners (New Hampshire Water Works, Granite State Rural Water Association and RCAP Solutions) to get important information out to drinking water systems. We are also working to set up a conference call for drinking water operators to call in and ask questions. More on that to come.

Finally, we want to recognize the important work you all do in assuring safe drinking water. Especially during this on-going crisis. What you do counts. So from us here at the Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau and the citizens of New Hampshire, Thank you!

As always, please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Take care, be careful, and be well. Chip

Harrison 'Chip' Mackey
NH Drinking Water Quality Manager
29 Hazen Dr; PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-0655
[Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau](#)