
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

WD-DWGB-7-9

2019

Guidance on Addressing Chemical MCL Violations in Well Sources

This guidance is provided to assist small public water systems in New Hampshire to evaluate feasible and economical options to address elevated levels of radionuclides, arsenic or other chemical Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) violations in well water supplies.

Given the fact that capital and operating costs for water treatment and disposal of residuals can quickly become a burden to small water systems, NHDES recommends evaluating non-treatment/ blending options **before** committing to long-term treatment upgrades. Potential non-treatment and treatment options for consideration are outlined below.

Non-treatment Options:

1. **Connect to a nearby public water system** – Design and construction for interconnection of any two public water systems in New Hampshire for the purpose of addressing a water quality issue may be eligible for grant funding from NHDES. Contact Cynthia Klevens at cynthia.klevens@des.nh.gov or (603) 271-3108 for assistance with this option.
2. **Blending/Partial Treatment** – Review historical water quality and collect new samples from each well source to establish whether blending and/or partial treatment may be adequate to achieve compliance.
3. **Develop new, supplemental or replacement well sources** – Shallow, gravel packed wells generally present lower levels of naturally occurring contaminants that are more prevalent in bedrock wells and may be used to blend with an existing source for addressing the radionuclides or arsenic standards. Contact Stephen Roy at (603) 271-3918 or stephen.roy@des.nh.gov for permitting assistance.

Treatment and Disposal Options

Once non-treatment options have been exhausted, possible treatment alternatives may be evaluated by reviewing the technical fact sheets and technology guidance sites listed below. Please contact cynthia.klevens@des.nh.gov, (603) 271-3108, to assist you in your evaluation. Additional details are as follows:

Radionuclides

Best available treatment options are ion exchange (point of entry) and reverse osmosis (point of use). Adsorption media are also available for radium removal. These processes concentrate the contaminants and generate low-level radioactive residuals that must be disposed of appropriately. State and federal regulations apply to packaging, transportation and disposal of radioactive wastes. Currently, any

residuals classified as low-level radioactive waste must be sent to out-of-state facilities that are permitted to receive such wastes. Federal guidance defines low-level radioactive wastes as 0.05% over background concentrations for uranium and 5 pCi/gram over background levels for radium or compliance gross alpha.

Guidance for treatment and disposal of radionuclides removed from public drinking water sources can be found in the following two fact sheets available through NHDES' Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau (DWGB) website:

- WD-DWGB-3-11 Mineral Radioactivity in Drinking Water
- WD-DWGB-22-21 Methods to Reduce the Concentration of Radionuclides in Drinking Water and Radionuclide Waste Disposal Criteria

Other options may be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be discussed with DWGB technical staff prior to pursuing.

Arsenic

Best available treatment options include point-of-entry iron-arsenic co-precipitation/filtration, anion exchange, adsorptive media, and point-of-use adsorptive cartridges and reverse osmosis units. The availability of residuals disposal for iron-arsenic backwash or concentrated salt regenerant waste is critical to establish the viability of either treatment option. Alternatively, throw-away or off-site regeneration of adsorptive media may be viable. A toxicity characteristic leaching procedure (TCLP) test is required prior to transport/disposal of spent adsorptive media at one of six permitted landfills in the state. Guidance on arsenic treatment and residuals handling/disposal can be found in the following two fact sheets available through NHDES' DWGB website:

- WD-DWGB-3-2 Arsenic in Drinking Water
- WD-DWGB-3-22 Arsenic Removal and Disposal for Public Water Systems

For More Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or visit our website at des.nh.gov.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of July 2019. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.