



State of Nevada

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

Bureau of Safe Drinking Water

protecting the future for generations

901 So. Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City NV 89701-5249

History of the Nevada Safe Drinking Water Program

1911 -- The Nevada Legislature passed the Crimes and Punishment Act which made furnishing impure water unlawful.

1952 -- The State Board of Health adopted water supply regulations that require systems to be constructed to sanitary standards.

1962 -- The U.S. Public Health Service promulgated standards for potable water used by interstate carriers such as buses, trains and airplanes. (The standards were also used to determine the safety of Nevada's water supplies).

1974 -- Congress enacted the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to enhance the safety of public drinking water in the United States through the establishment and enforcement of national drinking water standards. The standards were called maximum contaminant levels (MCL).

1978 -- The Nevada State Health Division was granted primary enforcement authority (primacy) for the SDWA in Nevada. The Bureau of Consumer Health Protection began a statewide inventory process for all types of public water systems and set up monitoring programs for community and non-community water systems. Clark County and Washoe District Health Departments were contracted to provide services for the drinking water program within their jurisdictions.

1986 -- Congress amended the SDWA mandating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to set an enforceable MCL for each of 83 new drinking water contaminants by 1989 and to add an additional 25 contaminants every three years thereafter; and establish regulations for surface water treatment, ground water disinfection (pending) and the lead and copper monitoring rule. The Surface Water Treatment Rule impacted systems which served the majority of the urban population in Nevada.

1991 -- The Nevada Legislature enacted new laws to assure that Nevada maintained primacy for the Safe Drinking Water Program and to assist Nevada's public water systems to comply with the SDWA requirements.

- \$125 million loan and grant program for water system compliance improvements
- Operator certification requirements for community systems serving >100 persons and all surface water systems
- Administrative enforcement authority
- Assure viability (capacity) of newly constructed water systems

1992 -- The Nevada Drinking Water and Wastewater Training Coalition was established to provide a training network for operators in Nevada. Distribution of the Waterlines newsletter to public water systems began.

1994 -- Congress considered SDWA reauthorization and the Governor and State Health Division advocated reforms by Congress to safeguard drinking water.

1996 -- Congress passed the SDWA Amendments which added a proposed radon rule, revised radionuclide rule, disinfection by-products rule, enhanced surface water treatment rule, public notification rule changes, and requirements for mandatory source water assessments at all public water systems.

1997 -- The State Board of Health adopted major revisions to the public water system construction regulations, now entitled "Public Water System Design, Construction, Operation and Maintenance".

1998 -- Congress enacted legislation that created capitalization grants for each state to establish a State Revolving Loan Fund for publicly owned community and non-transient non-community water systems. The Bureau of Health Protection Services, formerly the Bureau of Consumer Health Protection, administered the program in Nevada.

1999 -- Congress required all community public water systems to issue annual Consumer Confidence Reports. The Governor provided a waiver allowing very small systems to provide notice of the reports availability.

2001 -- The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency promulgated the final rule which reduced the arsenic maximum contaminant level from 0.05 mg/L to 0.01 mg/L. The MCL was later modified to 0.010 mg/L or 10 parts per billion. Community and non-transient non-community water systems must comply with the MCL which became effective on January 23, 2006.

2003 -- The Bureau of Health Protection Services completed the source water assessments for public water systems throughout Nevada. Public water systems were notified of the results and changes to monitoring requirements and monitoring waivers. The Nevada Legislature created legislation to move the State Revolving Loan Fund for drinking water systems from the Division of Health, Bureau of Health Protection Services, to the Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Pollution Control.

2005 -- The State Board of Health adopted temporary drinking water regulations to reflect the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for arsenic, public notification, radionuclide contaminants, disinfection by-products, lead and copper and operator certification. The Nevada Legislature moved the Safe Drinking Water Program from the Division of Health to the Division of Environmental Protection (Senate Bill 395). The State Environmental Commission adopted the temporary regulations as final regulations effective on October 31, 2005 (LCB File Nos. R129-05 and R126-05).