

Expedited Approval of Alternative Test Procedures/Safe Drinking Water Act: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency May 26th Federal Register Notice



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) published a May 26th Federal Register Notice announcing a final rule approving alternative test methods for use in measuring the levels of contaminants in drinking water to determine compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (“SDWA”) National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. See 86 Fed. Reg. 28277.

The final rule approves 17 additional methods for analyzing drinking water samples.

The SDWA applies certain standards to public water systems that provide water for human consumption through pipes, or other constructed conveyances, to at least 15 service connections or that regularly serve an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year. It applies to all large community and non-transient non-community water systems serving more than 10,000 people. A community water system is a public water system that has at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.

EPA regulates pursuant to the SDWA contaminants in public drinking water systems that may have an adverse effect on human health. A focus of the SDWA is the establishment of national standards for water quality in public drinking water systems. Section 1412(b)(1)(a) of the SDWA addresses EPA’s authority to establish National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for contaminants.

Public water systems are required to undertake certain sampling and monitoring to determine compliance with the previously referenced SDWA standards. They may use either the testing methods already established in existing EPA regulations or the alternative methods being approved in the May 26th final rule.

EPA states that for each contaminant (or group of contaminants) the 17 test methods are as effective as one or more of the test methods already approved in the SDWA for such contaminants. The agency notes that:

Section 1401(1) of SDWA states that the newly approved methods “shall be treated as an alternative for public water systems to the quality control and testing procedures listed in the regulation.”

A copy of the Federal Register Notice which includes the 17 alternative testing methods can be downloaded [here](#).