

# State Drinking Water Programs/Public Water Systems Compliance Data: U.S. EPA Office of Inspector General Report



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) issued a July 18th report titled:

*EPA Is Taking Steps to Improve State Drinking Water Reviews and Public Water Systems Compliance Data (“Report”)*

OIG states it undertook an evaluation of how EPA ensures that the Safe Drinking Water Act (“SDWA”) primacy states monitor and report drinking water sampling results from Public Water Systems (“PWSs”).

Primacy states are those granted primary responsibility for enforcement and implementation of the SDWA requirements. Arkansas has SDWA primacy.

SDWA regulations require that PWSs monitor and report on a specified periodic basis the quality of the drinking water supplied. The absence of such monitoring eliminates the ability of the PWS, consumers and/or state agencies to determine whether the supplied water is meeting health-based SDWA standards.

OIG’s Report states that EPA utilizes two primary oversight tools to determine whether PWSs are monitoring and reporting drinking water quality as required by the SDWA. They include:

- Program reviews of state drinking water programs which may specifically include the assessment of monitoring and reporting issues.
- Compliance data updated by primacy states in the federal version of the Safe Drinking Water Information System.

OIG identified what it describes as “limitations of the EPA’s oversight tools that impede the agency’s ability to conduct consistent oversight of the national drinking water program and reduce the reliability of EPA monitoring and reporting data. Nevertheless, OIG states that EPA is engaged in ongoing activities to address the limitations. Because it cannot determine the outcomes for the ongoing agency actions and based on what it describes as the “agency’s engagement to correct the issues. . . identified,” OIG makes no recommendations.

[A copy of the OIG Report can be downloaded here.](#)