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Safe Drinking Water Act Analysis/Sampling: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Final Rule Approving 17 Alternative Test Methods

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) published a final rule in the July 27th Federal Register announcing approval of 17 alternative Safe Drinking Water Act (“SDWA”) testing methods. See 82 Fed. Reg. 34861.

The testing methods would be utilized to measure the level of contaminants in drinking water and determine compliance with national SDWA primary drinking water regulations.

The SDWA requires that a public water system measure contaminants in drinking water samples. Monitoring requirements are incorporated in the national primary drinking water regulations for a particular contaminant.

EPA establishes standardized test procedures for analysis of the contaminant. The agency is also provided the authority to approve alternative analytical methods. For the agency to approve an alternative analytical method it must be determined to be “equally effective.”

EPA is utilizing this authority to provide 17 additional methods for analyzing drinking water samples. The federal agency describes this as an “expedited” approach providing:

... public water systems, laboratories, and primacy agencies with more timely access to new measurement techniques and greater flexibility in the selection of analytical methods, thereby reducing monitoring costs while maintaining public health protection.

The Federal Register Notice references methods developed by three types of organizations which include:

- EPA
- Voluntary Consensus Standard Bodies
- Vendors

The 17 methods are added to appendix A to subpart C 40 C.F.R. Part 141.

[A copy of the Federal Register Notice can be downloaded here.](#)