

Fluoridation Update – January 14, 2011

Information for Public Water Systems that provide fluoridated water in California

You may be aware that on January 7, 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) announced a proposal recommending that water systems practicing fluoridation adjust their fluoride content to 0.7 mg/L (parts per million), as opposed to the previous temperature-dependent optimal levels ranging from 0.7 mg/L to 1.2 mg/L. For more information, please note the following:

1. The announcement regarding the proposed change was published in the *Federal Register* on January 13, 2011 (FR Vol. 76, No. 9, beginning on page 2384). You may view the publication at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-637.pdf>. HHS will accept comments from the public and stakeholders on the proposed recommendation for 30 days, beginning January 13, at CWFcomments@cdc.gov. The announcement also includes a mailing address.
2. The following information is available via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/> :
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and HHS – January 7, 2011, Joint Press Release
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Community Water Fluoridation: Questions and Answers
3. HHS also includes a summary of the announcement and a link the *Federal Register* publication here: http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/01/pre_pub_frn_fluoride.html.

In view of this recent development, CDPH offers the following information and recommendations for public water systems:

- There is no change regarding federal health officials' strong and long-standing support regarding the value of fluoridation of drinking water. The proposed change in the optimal levels is a result recent scientific evidence in four areas on the subject: 1) the effectiveness of fluoridation on dental caries prevention and control for all age groups, 2) the availability of fluoride through other sources, 3) trends in the prevalence and severity of dental fluorosis, and 4) fluid intake by children across various ambient air temperatures.
- The January 13, 2011, announcement regarding fluoride levels in water is aimed at minimizing the chance that children develop dental fluorosis, a typically mild condition that causes a discoloration of teeth.
- The CDPH Drinking Water Program and the Office of Oral Health are reviewing the proposed change and will provide comments to HHS.
- California water systems practicing fluoridation are still required to comply with state fluoridation regulations (Title 22, Chapter 15, Article 4.1, Sections 64433 - 64434, CCR). Therefore, it is important to continue fluoridation in accordance with your CDPH public water supply permit and state regulations. However, until further notice, CDPH recommends that water systems practicing fluoridation operate their fluoridation system toward the lower end of their range prescribed in their permit and/or Section 64433.2, yet remain compliant with the requirements in Section 64433.3(b).
- Please contact your local CDPH District Office if you have any questions regarding the addition of fluoride to the water supply or the maintenance of optimum fluoride concentrations in the water delivered to your customers.
- Please note that tooth decay is the number one chronic condition for children. It may result in pain, poor nutrition, and dysfunctional speech, as well as a lack of concentration, poor appearance, low self-esteem and absenteeism. Optimally fluoridated water is the single most cost-effective strategy that a community can take to improve the oral health of its residents. Studies consistently show that water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by 20 to 40 percent. The recommendations proposed by HHS resulted from an updated review of the various current sources of fluoride, including water fluoridation. Providing the right level of fluoride protects the dental health of people of all ages, not just children.