



Fact Sheet

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management *Center for Environmental Health*

Program Mission:

The California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management (DDWEM) promotes and maintains a physical, chemical, and biological environment that contributes positively to health, prevents illness, and assures protection of the public. DDWEM is comprised of the following programs: the Drinking Water Program, the Environmental Management Branch, the Drinking Water and Radiation Laboratory Branch, and the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program.

Program Descriptions and Activities

1. **Drinking Water Program (DWP).** DWP regulates approximately 8,000 public water systems (PWS) and provides funding opportunities for water system infrastructure improvements, including funding under Proposition 84, Proposition 50, the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SDWSRF), and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).
 - Inspections of public water systems (PWS), issues operating permits, reviews plans and specifications for new facilities, takes enforcement actions for noncompliance with laws and regulations, reviews water quality monitoring results, and supports and promotes security of PWS.
 - Primary responders for CDPH to all natural disasters (floods, wildfires, earthquakes, mudslides), which have the potential to affect PWS.
 - Responsible for implementing all drinking water quality regulations.
 - Facilitates funding of PWS infrastructure improvements through the SDWSRF and other financing programs by preparing technical evaluations of the possible alternatives for solving the problem.
 - Evaluates recycled water proposals acting in an advisory capacity to the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs).
 - Coordinates its activities with EPA, SWRCB, RWQCBs, and a wide variety of other parties interested in the protection of drinking water supplies.
 - Works with county health departments, planning departments, and boards of supervisors. Primacy has been delegated by CDPH to 33 counties to regulate small water system programs.
2. **DWP Field Operations Branches – North and South.** The Northern and Southern California Drinking Water Field Operations Branches (DWFOB) enforce the federal and California Safe Drinking Water Acts (SDWA) and provide regulatory oversight of the 8,000 PWS in California. DWFOB also evaluates the public health protection elements of

proposals to use recycled water. DWFOB includes five regions and 23 districts throughout the state.

3. **Environmental Management Branch (EMB)**. EMB regulates medical waste generators, shellfish production and harvesting operations, and recreational health (swimming pools). EMB also oversees radiological surveillance and remediation for federal base closures, the State's indoor radon program, and emergency planning activities in and around nuclear power generating facilities. EMB includes the following programs:

Department of Defense Program consults with and supports Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) missions in the assessment of existing environmental conditions at all military facilities throughout California.

Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program is responsible for assuring that persons working in the environmental health profession meet minimum educational, training, and experience requirements.

Indoor Radon Program, through a matching EPA grant, reduces the health risk from radon by increasing awareness, providing discounted testing for homeowners, identifying areas of high radon potential, and promoting mitigation and radon resistant construction. The program also administers and enforces the certification program for radon service providers.

Institutions Program is responsible for conducting environmental health surveys and construction plan reviews of conservation camps, hospitals, developmental centers, youth and community correctional facilities, fairgrounds and other state-operated facilities to determine compliance with health and safety laws, regulations, industry standards, and safe operating practices.

Medical Waste Management Program conducts an active inspection program to ensure all health care facilities and off-site medical waste treatment and transfer station facilities are compliant with the Medical Waste Management Act. The program also issues permits and registrations, investigates illegal disposal incidents, and conducts enforcement activities

Nuclear Emergency Response Program, in coordination with California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA), the Program maintains section 9 of the State of California Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Response Plan and additional emergency response procedures for nuclear power plant emergencies.

Preharvest Shellfish Protection and Marine Biotoxin Monitoring Program conducts sanitary surveys for pollution source identification and classifies and monitors potential and existing commercial shellfish growing areas in conformance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) to establish sanitary requirements for shellfish growing waters and to regulate the commercial growing and harvesting of shellfish to assure that shellfish are safe for human consumption.

Recreational Health and Beach Safety Program promotes and assures the safety of recreational waters throughout California. This program is responsible for developing and implementing initiatives to systemically attack the underlying causes of preventable disease and hazardous conditions associated with coastal waters, swimming pools, and other recreational waters.

4. **Drinking Water and Radiation Laboratory Branch (DWRLB)**. DWRLB is California's primacy drinking water quality testing laboratory and is the only State laboratory capable of measuring environmental radiation. DWRLB has two laboratories: Southern California Section and Northern California Section. Each laboratory performs microbiological and radiochemical testing of water and other environmental matrices. Both laboratories are certified by EPA to perform drinking water analysis of over 100 federally regulated contaminants using EPA-approved methods.

5. **Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP)**. ELAP provides evaluation and accreditation of environmental testing laboratories to ensure the quality of analytical data used for regulatory purposes to meet the requirements of the State's food, drinking water, wastewater, shellfish, and hazardous waste programs.