

Summer 7-1-2011

Service Connection: The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter, Volume 19, Issue 2 (Summer 2011)

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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Maine Department of Health and Human Services and Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Service Connection: The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter, Volume 19, Issue 2 (Summer 2011)" (2011). *Center for Disease Control Documents*. 19. https://digitalmaine.com/mecdc_docs/19

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Service Connection

THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water"

Volume 19 Issue 2
Summer 2011



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The Long Road to Compliance: How Jackman Utility District Achieved Disinfection By-products Compliance

Jennifer Grant, Compliance Officer

Jackman Utility District began testing for

disinfection by-products or DBPs back in 2004, when the Stage 1 Disinfectants/Disinfection By-products Rule (Stage 1 DBP Rule) came into effect for their water system. It was soon clear that they would be unable to maintain consistent compliance with the Rule, when they failed to meet the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for both Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) and Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) as a running annual average (RAA).

Initially, to cut costs, the operators began making some small system changes in-house, such as lowering the free chlorine residual entering the distribution system and even changing the chlorine injection point, so that disinfected water had less time to sit around and form DBPs before entering the distribution system. The District even extended their intake in 2007, in an effort to pull in higher quality water. While these changes yielded small decreases in TTHMs and HAA5s, it was not enough. DBP levels were still twice the MCL during some monitoring periods and the Utility faced some tough choices: upgrade their existing surface water plant with additional treatment or pursue a new groundwater source. Not unlike other systems in their predicament the District was still paying for a relatively new surface water treatment plant to treat water from Big Wood Pond, and groundwater exploration was too costly an investment for something that was not a sure thing.



Treatment Plant at Jackman Utility District

With a focus on what they already had, Jackman began working with their filter plant manufacturer on ways to optimize treatment. They operate a conventional surface water plant that utilizes a coagulant, to help remove Total Organic Carbon (TOC) and other organic DBP precursor material from the water. This material is removed from the water just prior to filtration with the help of a clarifier. It was in the coagulation and clarification processes that the Utility and their consultant saw the opportunity to make some serious headway in the removal of DBP precursor material. They began experimenting with several different coagulants, considering such things as cost, availability of product, effectiveness in different water temperatures and overall effectiveness in lowering DBP precursor levels (specifically TOC removal), as well as DBP levels. In addition, the District relocated their coagulant injection point to

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"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water"

Director's Corner

Knowledge is Power

Regardless of the type of facility you own or operate, you are involved in managing risks to your customers, employees and your bottom line. Knowledge of the risks associated with your business and knowledge of how to minimize that risk will give you power to actually reduce risk.

Many regulations are aimed at reducing risks to your customers and employees. Regulations often provide the minimum acceptable standards for a particular risk. If you are making decisions about health and safety, based solely on meeting the minimum regulations, you are likely missing out on the benefits that come from knowing how to protect your customers. Regulations cannot be designed to anticipate every possible circumstance. Complying with all regulations will reduce your risk, but knowledge of the purpose of the regulations will increase your ability to anticipate risks and manage them in a way that works best for your facility.

Recently, our sister agency, the Health Inspection Program, established a requirement for all restaurants to have a Certified Food Protection Manager. In order to receive this certification, a person must demonstrate that he/she has the knowledge to prevent, eliminate, or reduce the risks of food borne illness. With this knowledge, a business owner or operator can proactively implement a system of controls to reduce risk.

As a public water system owner or operator, you, too, can take a proactive risk reduction approach by gaining and using the appropriate knowledge. Here are some of the

fundamental areas of knowledge necessary to reduce your risks:

Protection of Your Source

For most water systems in Maine, the source of water is a drilled well. Protect your well from physical damage and protect your groundwater from contamination. Any contaminant poured, dumped or placed on the ground near your well could affect your water quality.

Properly Collect Your Samples

Failures to collect samples and sampling errors have cost public water systems in Maine lots of time and money. If you do not take appropriate cautions when collecting your Total Coliform samples, you could end up with a false positive. For most water systems this will result in a minimum of five additional water samples, costing \$100 or more.

Maintain Your Treatment System

Most treatment systems are in place to reduce your customer's exposure to a known contaminant. Failure to regularly and effectively maintain your treatment system puts the health of your customers at risk.

Are you interested in increasing your knowledge about how to safely and effectively supply water to your customers? Give us a call and we can either provide you the knowledge or put you in touch with the right resources.

Yours for Safe Drinking Water,

Roger



Service Connection

THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Why I Didn't Sample...

Yvette Meunier, Compliance Officer



During my first year on the job, I have had to send out hundreds of Failure to Monitor violations to public water systems (PWS). In an effort to reduce the number of these violations, I would like to

share three of the most common reasons I've heard for not taking a sample and my suggestions for how to avoid these violations:

1. "I wasn't sent a bottle." Unfortunately, bottles can get lost in the mail and bottle orders may inadvertently not get processed. In this instance, and in general, you must be your own watch dog. As the owner of a PWS, it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure compliance with the Drinking Water Program. Use your required testing sheet as your guide to compliance. If your system is nearing the end of a compliance period and is still due to sample but you have not yet received a bottle, pick up the phone and call us. Also, plan on sampling earlier in your compliance period to give yourself additional time to order replacement test kits, if needed.

2. "I thought I had already taken it." Typically these situations happen when either the sample recently taken got rejected by the lab and a replacement kit was sent, or when a yearly sample kit is sent just after a monthly or quarterly kit was received by the PWS. Receiving an unexpected kit can be confusing. When in doubt, open the box right away and read any paperwork inside. Then reference your sampling schedule and call your compliance officer. It is highly likely these kits were sent to you for a reason and that they will need to be taken before the end of the month in which they were shipped. Keep track of the analytical results sent to you by the lab— this is your

receipt for conducting the sampling. This practice will help clear up any confusion whether the sample(s) has been collected or not. Also, create reminders as to when samples need to be collected.

3. "I didn't know I had to test." Seasonal businesses can change hands or have turnover in staff. Because of this, I hear many people say "I didn't know I had to test," or "the person who used to take the test is no longer working here."

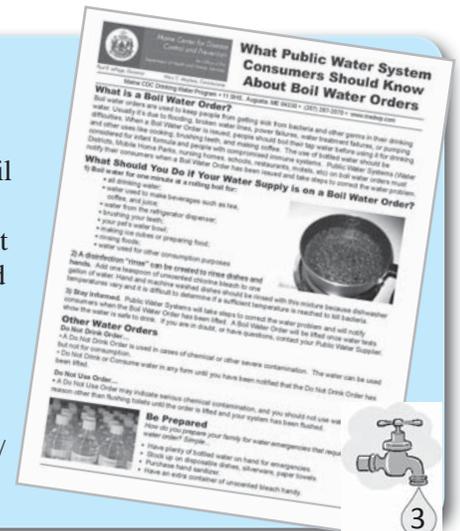
Running a PWS is an important responsibility, and it is for this reason that businesses should have a business continuity plan. The plan should describe the roles and responsibilities of running the water system, in case someone can no longer fulfill their duties.



One final thought: Federal Regulations hold the PWS responsible for completing all water tests. The PWS will receive a Failure to Monitor violation regardless of whether the laboratory sends the sample or replacement bottles. Owners and operators of PWS should keep track of sampling schedules. If you've mailed a sample to your lab and you have not received results within a week or two, call your lab to ask about the status. Remember to sample as early as possible in the compliance period. These practices could help prevent a violation.

New Boil Water Order Consumer Handout Available

While no one wants to have to institute a Boil Water Order for their water system, a Boil Water Order (or other type of Drinking Water Order) may become necessary at some point in time to protect your water system consumers. Because you can't always predict when your water system will face an emergency such as a Boil Water Order, it is a good idea to be prepared ahead of time. One way you can prepare is by having information for your consumers on hand in the event of a Boil Water Order. To help you provide information to your consumers, the DWP has developed a one-page handout designed for consumers of public water systems that are on Boil Water Orders. The one-page document can be found on the DWP website at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/eng/water/resources/emergency_plan.htm#bwo.





ENFORCEMENT CORNER

Tera Pare, Enforcement & Rulemaking Coordinator

Have you ever wondered what might possibly lead a public water system down the expensive path of Formal Enforcement? Formal Enforcement includes consent orders, fines, and possible court action. Read on to discover some of those wrong turns which may lead to more requirements and expenses down the road.

WRONG TURN #1: Running a Red Light (Missing Test Results or Failing to Report Test Results): Public water system managers, owners and/or operators must stop and test drinking water for specific contaminants at specific times. What is being tested, and how often? That information is written on each public water system's annual Drinking Water Testing Requirements sheet, which is mailed early each year. If any of those requirements change, the Drinking Water Program will let that PWS know. Still foggy? Call the Drinking Water Program to clearly know these testing requirements.

WRONG TURN #2: Speeding (Exceeding a Maximum Contaminant Level): Those contaminants required to be tested by the public water systems carry a legal, acceptable limit. If water results report a higher level than that limit, then more miles must be traveled to protect the PWS customers/ residents/ consumers, which may include some or all of the following: investigating why the levels were high, repairing equipment or a well, treating the water, or finding another water source. When the PWS fails to slow down to communicate with the DWP and fix the problem, then orders and fines may be around the corner. That means more trouble and expenses for the PWS.



What Signs Should you Follow? How to Stay on Track:

1. Read your annual Drinking Water Testing Requirements sheet, work with your lab, fill and send all required water samples to your lab, AND have the lab report sent to the Drinking Water Program in time. Do not assume that labs always promptly report those results.

2. Don't ignore the signs. If the DWP contacts you, read and respond. If the DWP finds a problem, do not drive at night without your headlights. Being proactive and responsive shows the DWP that the PWS wants to fix the issue and comply, which means fewer obstacles and potholes later. The DWP can help with solutions.

3. If there is ever a question about what you, as a PWS, must do to stay on the right path, it is always wise to contact the DWP. Never assume that the destination is always known. We're your GPS!



DWSRF Update & Needs Survey

Norm Lamie, Chief Engineer

In early April, the FY 2011 federal budget was adopted. The budget included funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. On June 20, 2011, Governor Paul R. LePage signed the State Budget passed by the Legislature. The Budget included allocation of \$570,000 from the General Fund to provide the balance of the State Match for the 2011 Drinking Water SRF allowing, access to the EPA \$9.4M Capitalization Grant. On May 5th, our Grant Application and Intended Use Plan was submitted to EPA Region 1. Approval is anticipated in mid July.

In early May, award notices were sent to public water systems with the top 11 projects on the Primary List. PWS's with the remaining 7 projects on the Primary List have been notified of approval, subject to acquisition of the balance of the State Match.

It's hard to believe the project request for the 2012 DWSRF will be going out within the next three months, but as MWUA President Steve Cox reminded us last month "One who fails to plan, plans to fail." It's time to plan for next year's projects.

As I mentioned before, the 2011 DWSRF Needs Survey is under way. Twenty five randomly-selected utilities were asked to provide information on SRF funded drinking water infrastructure needs for the next twenty years. This information will be compiled and will be used for SRF state allocations over the next four years. As of today, five surveys have been returned. The first one through the door came from Jon Ziegra at Boothbay Region Water District.

The response rate on the 2011 EPA Needs Survey has been fantastic. I was hopeful of receiving 33% of the surveys by early May; I now have 54% of the surveys returned. Thank you. Now, the next challenge is for me to get them accepted by EPA.

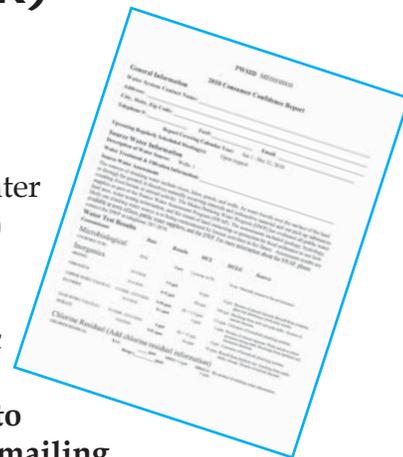
Questions regarding the 2011 DWSRF application process should be directed to Norm Lamie at (207) 287-2647 or Nate Saunders at (207) 287-5685.

NEW!

Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Mailing Waivers Now Available

Scott Whitney, Compliance Officer

At the DWP's request, Governor LePage has approved the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Mailing Waiver option for community public water systems serving fewer than 10,000 persons, provided in 40 CFR §141.155(g) of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Governor has designated the Maine Drinking Water Program authority to administer the CCR Mailing Waiver. The CCR is an annual water quality report that community public water systems must distribute to their customers each year. Under the CCR Mailing Waiver, a small community public water system **can choose to publish the entire CCR in a local newspaper serving the area, instead of mailing individual copies of CCRs to each customer. In some cases, this option can save a lot of money in copying and mailing costs.**



In order to qualify for the CCR Mailing Waiver, your community public water system must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Serve a population of fewer than 10,000 persons; and
2. Have no outstanding safe drinking water violations; and
3. Have no detection level of a regulated drinking water contaminant above 50% of the Maximum Contaminant Level; and
4. Submit a written request for the waiver to the DWP. Please note that a waiver request must be submitted each year.

If a CCR Mailing Waiver is approved by the DWP for your water system, complete the following:

1. Inform customers that you will not be providing individual copies of the CCR by mail or other direct delivery method (e.g. notice in bills); and
2. Publish the report annually in one or more local newspapers serving the areas in which the water system's customers are located; and
3. Make copies of the CCR available to the public upon request; and
4. Send the DWP a copy of the CCR (full page of newspaper with the article) by July 1, 2011 and the Certification Form by October 1, 2011.

If you are interested in applying for a CCR Mailing Waiver, please send a written request to the DWP with the following information: your water system's name, PWSID#, quantity of population served, the newspaper(s) you intend to publish the CCR, the owner/designated operator's signature and date. If you have any questions about the CCR Mailing Waiver, or CCR distribution requirements in general, please contact your regional compliance officer by email or telephone.

Continued from Front Page [Jackman]...

the raw water pump station at the lake to provide even more contact time before the clarification process.

With a great deal of patience and tenacity, in early 2011, Jackman Utility District was finally able to optimize treatment to a level that reduced their RAAs for both TTHMs and HAA5s consistently

below the MCLs. Now they fully meet all terms of their administrative consent order with the DWP and are in full compliance. The Jackman Utility District has expressed appreciation for the close working relationship with the DWP, as well as our patience in working toward a cost-effective solution. The DWP recognizes and commends the staff of the Jackman Utility District for tirelessly working toward compliance with the Stage 1 DBP Rule.



Grants Update

Andy Tolman, Assistant Director



We re-organized our grant process this year to make it more effective for both our staff and public water systems. We added a new category of source water (surface water) protection grants, continued wellhead protection grants, and put capacity development grants on a schedule. We received more requests this year than in any recent year, which provided us with a dilemma, in that we had significantly more qualified and interested applicants than funding for both wellhead and source water grants. We have also committed to run a second round of grant competition in the fall, and needed to conserve some funding for those applicants.

Source water protection grants have been awarded to Kennebec, York, Berwick, Ellsworth and Canton for projects involving both planning and implementation of improvements for watershed protection. The projects range from bridge and culvert improvements to watershed and shoreland zone surveys. All engage the water systems with partners to protect and improve water quality.

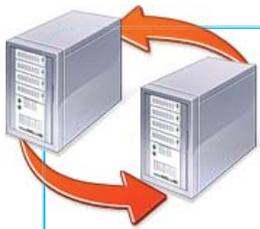
Wellhead protection grants also include both planning and implementation work, such as replacement of oil tanks and electrical transformers that pose threats, site security improvements, development of ordinances, and monitoring networks to assess and manage land use activities. We were able to fund 60% of wellhead protection grant of requests this round.

Capacity Grants are limited by EPA to studies and evaluations, and cannot be used for implementation. Grant requests include energy audits, emergency response planning, exploration for new sources, system planning and evaluation, Geographic Information System development, ordinance and terms and conditions reviews. We have provided grants to thirteen systems in this round.

If you did not submit a grant this spring but have a project in mind, or if you submitted a grant application but were not awarded a grant, stay tuned for information pertaining to the fall round of grants available. For more information about any DWP grants or loans, visit our website at www.medwp.com and click on "Financial Services."

Working Toward Electronic Sample Data Submittal

Robin Frost, SDWIS Administrator



The DWP is working with commercial and utility laboratories to assist them in submitting sample results

electronically. Recently, we held three training sessions with labs in Portland, Bangor and Vassalboro, to introduce a sample data entry tool that will facilitate this effort for the smaller labs. The larger labs, ones that use Laboratory Information Management Systems, have expressed an interest in creating their own data mapping to provide electronic data to the DWP, while avoiding entering the data twice. As labs begin this effort, DWP staff will be available to assist them with their data mapping. After January 1, 2012, the DWP will only accept laboratory data submitted electronically.

Electronic sample data submittal provides several advantages over receiving sample reports by mail, fax or e-mail, any of which can be "lost" in transit, or, once in the office, can be subject to human error by way

of manual data entry. When the DWP receives sample data electronically, it will migrate into our database in the exact way that the laboratory sent it.

Public water systems will need to provide their laboratories with specific information that will ensure that their sample data transfers into the DWP's Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) database correctly. That information includes: the PWSID# (example: ME0000001), the sample location/facility as it is listed in the DWP database (examples: WELL HD 1, MANIFOLD 1, TREAT PT 1), and the sample point (examples: WL-1, MN-1, TP-1).

Without these three pieces of information, the laboratory cannot provide the sample data to the DWP electronically. This information can be found on the Drinking Water Testing Requirements sheet that the DWP sends to systems each year, and you can always call the DWP if you need help determining what to send to your laboratory. It's

also a good idea to provide some kind of specific information to clarify where your sample was taken and include this information on the chain of custody that you send to your laboratory.

As with any new endeavor, there will be a period of time in which the DWP and the laboratories will have to work together to create data files in the format that our SDWIS database requires them. During this time, please be patient with the DWP and the laboratories if errors are made. If a system receives a Failure to Monitor violation after providing the laboratory with all necessary information for electronic sample transfer, please let the DWP know as soon as possible, and we'll correct the error immediately.

If you have any questions regarding this process or laboratories need assistance with electronic sample submission, please call contact Robin Frost (robin.frost@maine.gov, 287-8411) or Ami Stillings (amilyn.stillings@maine.gov, 287-6472).

Quality Assurance of Drinking Water Chemicals and Additives

Jennifer Donnell, Security & Fluoridation Specialist

Maine water operators take great effort to produce quality water 24 hours a day. The responsibility of quality assurance rests with each operator. Diligent operators look carefully at drinking water chemicals and additives to assure that the water system uses the highest quality products available.



All chemicals must be certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 60. Because changes take place with suppliers and manufacturers, operators should be vigilant in tracking their ANSI/NSF Standard 60 certified products. The critical point is to check for the Standard 60 certification before the product is unloaded. Once unloaded, it is yours, regardless of quality. For bulk shipments, the ANSI/NSF Standard 60 certification stamp is on the bill of lading, shipping papers, or may come in the form of a certificate of analysis. Drums may or may not be marked. Bags should always be marked as they are manufactured, certified, and packaged on site. The Drinking Water Program has an updated Fact Sheet called ANSI/NSF Standard 60-Marking Requirements for Certified Products. You can find this two-page guide on our web site at www.medwp.com or call 207-287-2070, and we can email or send one out. Many facilities now have excellent documentation showing that their facility is receiving the best drinking water products certified to the highest standard possible.

Water Operator Board News

Teresa Trott, Licensing Officer



Operator Statute Revision Passes, Rule Changes Upcoming

The water operator examination process is moving forward. Necessary changes to statute allow for third party exam administration (e.g. computer based testing) and the separation of examination and licensing fees. There is an increased fee cap of \$95 for any one

service. Former fee caps were \$60 for renewal and \$70 for examination and licensure. The changes passed the legislature and will become law at the end of the session. This change allows the Board to re-write rules detailing the licensure process and setting new fees. Although the changes may look substantial, due mostly to re-organization, they should help the rules to be easier to understand. Watch the DWP website for proposed rule changes, hearing dates and updates about computer based exams availability by year's end. Paper-based testing will continue for the short-term. There will be Water Operator Board meetings on July 14th and September 15th in Augusta.

March Exam Results

Sixty-one exams were administered in March. Congratulations to those persons passing the exams. All of the persons taking the Very Small Water System and Class I Distribution exams passed. Pass rates were also high on Class I and II-Direct Entry Treatment and Class II, II-Direct Entry and IV Distribution. Challenges continue for Treatment Class II, III and IV, as well as Distribution II and IV-Direct Entry.

Sequential and Direct-Entry Options

The Board is reviewing present sequential and direct entry examination options. The Board will discuss maintaining the direct entry examination options and sequential examination requirements. If you have questions or comments about these options, please discuss them with a Board member. Contact information is available on the website at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/eng/water/licensing/operators/board.htm>.

Field Inspector Jeff Folger Retires



Jeff Folger, the Field Inspector for Transient and Non-Transient Non-Community water systems in Region 5 retired from the Drinking Water Program on May 31, 2011. Jeff has worked within the Drinking Water Program for over 15 years with a total of over 32 years within State Government. Jeff will truly be missed for his willingness to help with any problem, share his experiences and advice, or just lend an ear. Nate Saunders, Field Inspection Team Manager will be covering questions and concerns for water systems in Region 5 until a new Field Inspector is assigned. Nate can be contacted at 287-5685 or nathan.saunders@maine.gov.





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Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

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The Continuous Improvement Loop

Nathan Saunders, Field Inspection Team Manager

A Strategy to Increase Productivity and Success in Your Organization

Continuous Improvement is a way-of-life for every productive and successful organization. You've heard it before... the buzz word... "Continuous Improvement." It's a concept whose benefit is readily acknowledged by all, then shelved so we can attend to the fires at hand. Yet in a way, we all do it constantly and naturally in our own lives, every day. In our professional lives, if our goal should be to best serve our customers amidst an ever changing world. Our challenge (and it can be a fun and rewarding challenge) is to "work" to apply continuous improvement strategies every day.

Continuous improvement is a process made up of only a few steps:



The beginning of the process is identifying opportunities (setting reasonable goals). This is often done with a group in a brainstorming session to gather ideas. When you brainstorm with a group, hold back on evaluating ideas until the next step-it helps to keep the ideas flowing freely without shutting people down. Set this ground rule at the beginning of your brainstorming session. After Brainstorming, evaluate the ideas by discussing them together and asking clarifying questions. Use tools and data as much as possible when evaluating. After the evaluation, identify actions and prioritize them based on agreed upon criteria (know what is important to you). Using a scoring method when prioritizing with a group is helpful, just make sure you clarify what a high score means (e.g. does a high score mean the action is lowest cost, or most likely to satisfy the customer). After completing actions that were determined to be priorities, measure and evaluate results. Measurement is incredibly important in this process – when you chose actions, make sure you can measure the results of the action.

Now here is the kicker... completing this process doesn't stop after the first time around. After evaluating results, go back and identify new opportunities that have resulted from your work, and on, and on... continuously... it never stops.... this is the "art" of the continuous improvement concept.

The areas where Continuous Improvement can be applied are endless.

Some examples are:

- Reduction in cost of services to customers
- Reduction in inventory costs
- Improved safety record
- Documentation of processes,
- Collection of payments
- Reduction in frequency of main breaks
- Reduction of pumping costs
- Lowering expenses
- Improved customer satisfaction

The areas where continuous improvement can be applied are endless, but some examples are: reduction in cost of services to customers, reduction in inventory costs, improved safety record, documentation of processes, collection of payments, reducing the frequency of main breaks, pumping costs, lowering expenses, customer satisfaction, etc.

One recommendation that I have is to set a pace for yourselves that you can live with-don't over do it. If this is truly going to be a continuous process for you and your organization, then at any time you will be in different stages of the process, working continuous improvement efforts on different areas of your work, all in parallel. Setting a pace will help you embrace this as an ongoing process. Since measurement is an integral part of the process, you will be seeing results! Measured results help feed the process, enabling you to make changes to adapt to successes and failures, always working toward positive and continuous improvement.

If you would like to share the strategy of continuous improvement with your organization in order to begin the process and start reaping its benefits, a brief power point presentation has been developed for your use, available from our website at www.medwp.com, under downloadable documents, resources. The title of the presentation is "The Continuous Improvement Loop". If you have any questions on implementing the Continuous Improvement Loop in your organization, or stories about your experiences, please contact me at 287-5685 or nathan.saunders@maine.gov, it is a great subject to discuss.

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program
"Working Together For Safe Drinking Water"

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