

MassDEP

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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Massachusetts' First-In-The-Nation Perchlorate Standards Take Effect Today Drinking Water, Cleanup Standards of 2 ppb Are Set to Protect Public Health

Massachusetts today became the first state in the nation to promulgate drinking water and waste site cleanup standards for the chemical perchlorate, setting the standard at 2 parts per billion (ppb). The new regulations require most public water systems to regularly test for perchlorate.

The new standards are being adopted to protect public health, including sensitive populations such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants and individuals with low levels of thyroid hormones. Perchlorate has been found to interfere with thyroid function, which could lead to impaired human development and metabolism.

"Our goal from the beginning of this effort was to protect the health of our citizens, especially pregnant women and children, who could potentially be exposed to perchlorate in their drinking water," said Robert W. Gollidge, Jr., commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. "Massachusetts' new standards ensure that the water is safe to drink, and the monitoring requirement protects water supplies into the future."

Perchlorate is a chemical that can be found in blasting agents, fireworks, military munitions and other manufacturing processes, and can be generated in small amounts within existing water treatment processes. No federal standards regulating perchlorate levels in drinking water currently exist.

Besides the requirement for regular testing, the new regulations also require parties responsible for perchlorate contamination to notify MassDEP of the contamination and conduct appropriate environmental assessment and cleanup, and for all drinking water supplies to contain no more than 2 ppb of perchlorate.

Since perchlorate was first detected in the aquifer under Bourne in 2002, the chemical has been detected in 10 other public water systems across the state.

Full copies of the regulation and the response-to-comment document are available on the MassDEP web site at: <http://mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/percinfo.htm>

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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