

## **DRINKING WATER REGULATIONS**

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), enacted in 1974, authorized the USEPA to design national standards for the states to enforce and monitor public water systems nationwide. Monitoring requirements differ according to whether the system is a community or non-community supply. Community and regional water supplies are developed, owned and operated by various government agencies or private groups. Some private businesses, such as trailer parks or hospitals, often supply water as an added service. These suppliers must meet some or all of the federal drinking water regulations.

Increasing concerns about drinking water quality led congress to amend the SDWA in 1986, making it stricter and more inclusive. The 1986 amendments extended federal, state and local responsibilities for protection of community water supplies. Water utilities must provide the necessary facilities and personnel to assure delivery of an adequate supply of water that consistently meets the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. Under the 1986 amendments, community water suppliers are subject to increased public scrutiny since the public must be notified of each drinking water violation, and they are subject to more frequent and larger fines for violations.

Drinking water standards must be met for 108 contaminants, which include biological contaminants, pathogenic bacteria, viruses, protozoa, etc.; lead; radio nuclides; by-products of disinfection; organic chemicals, nitrates and other inorganic chemicals. The states do, however, have the authority to waive monitoring requirements for many contaminants if the substances have never been used in an area or if it is demonstrated that water systems are not vulnerable to contamination by the substance.