

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch

DWS Circular Letter 2020-19

TO: Environmental Laboratories
FROM: Lori Mathieu, Public Health Branch Chief, EHDW
DATE: March 30, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "L. Mathieu" with "2020" written next to it.

SUBJECT: Important Information for Environmental Laboratories During the COVID-19 Crisis

As the State of Connecticut continues to move forward in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, we are reaching out to all Environmental Laboratories to provide the following guidance.

How to Contact DPH Drinking Water Section:

Please note that DPH DWS is open for business and available to help labs during normal business hours (M-F 8-4:30). During this time, most staff are working remotely to better protect our workforce in order to serve you. Email is the preferred method of contact at this time. Please email your question or concern to DWDcompliance@ct.gov or to a specific DWS staff employee's email (typically fullfirstname.lastname@ct.gov) and we will be happy to assist you. Emergency numbers are available on the Drinking Water Section (DWS) main phone line (860) 509-7333 message to report emergency incidents or acute water quality issues. As noted during the past call/webinar, please call the DWS at 860-692-2333 to report the presence of E.coli in any of the public drinking water samples analyzed by your Laboratory in addition to calling the public water system owner/operator.

Where to Find the Latest Information for Environmental Laboratories on COVID-19:

Please refer to the [DWS COVID-19 webpage](#) for helpful information and recommended guidance for Environmental Laboratories to consider on topics such as water quality monitoring requirements, planning, consumer messaging, PWS operations, and operator certification (if applicable). Also please remember to check the DWS webpage frequently for the most recent Circular Letters as this situation rapidly evolves.

For the latest general information, resources, and guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), please visit the State of Connecticut <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus> and CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus> webpages.



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www.ct.gov/dph/publicdrinkingwater

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Water Quality Monitoring Requirements:

At this time, EPA has not and does not plan to suspend or lift any water quality monitoring requirements for PWS. Therefore, PWS are still required to conduct all operational and required water quality monitoring especially acute parameters such as E.coli, nitrate and nitrite. Detailed information regarding water quality monitoring, by parameter, is available on the [DWS COVID-19 webpage](#). If a PWS with facilities is fully closed and water is not available for public consumption please notify the Department of the date which the PWS closed and also when it reopens (once applicable). The lab may also need to use alternate sampling locations, as necessary. All requests for the use of alternate sampling locations or notifications of PWS closure should be emailed to DWDcompliance@ct.gov.

As of this date, DPH has communicated with all Environmental Laboratories and they are all still open for business. However, safety of samplers and laboratory personnel is also a top priority during this time and communicating any changes in advance will help reduce the likelihood of any future monitoring and reporting issues.

Seasonal Public Water Systems:

Many seasonal PWS will be remaining closed in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7H requiring non-essential functions to remain closed until the order is lifted. As a reminder, all seasonal public water systems must conduct the appropriate seasonal start up procedures and submit the certification prior to serving water to the public. As practiced in previous years, systems should notify the DWS if the anticipated opening date is after the due date identified in the system's [water quality monitoring schedule](#).

Thank you to all of our Environmental Laboratories that are working hard to protect public health and that of their consumers during this time.

c: Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA, Department of Public Health
Certified Operators
Local Health Directors