



## **Providing Safe Drinking Water in America: 2006 National Public Water Systems Compliance Report - Fact Sheet**

**What is the scope of the report?** The National Public Water System Compliance Report for 2006 describes how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its state and tribal partners are meeting the goal of ensuring that Americans receive safe drinking water from public water systems (PWSs). The report also discusses the data we use to measure our success and the progress we are making in our efforts to increase its reliability and completeness. Appendix B of the report summarizes, in table format, the annual reports that each State must prepare discussing drinking water violations at PWSs in their jurisdictions.

Additionally, the report summarizes PWS compliance in Indian country, including violations on Indian country, EPA's enforcement and compliance assistance activities with respect to tribal PWSs, and the financial assistance EPA has provided to facilitate the provision of safe drinking water to Tribes.

**Who are the potential users of the report?** The target audience for the report is the public.

### **PWS COMPLIANCE**

The report concludes that most Americans received drinking water from public water systems that recorded no significant violations in 2006. Ninety-three percent of America's public water systems did not have any reported violations of health-based standards, and 73% of the population is served by public water systems which did not have any reported significant violations in 2006. The tribes did not report a health-based violation for 89% of their public water systems, and 53% of the populations served by public water systems in Indian country did not have any reported significant violations in 2006.

This report uses information from the Federal Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS/FED), the national database in which EPA records information the states are required to report on PWS compliance. For the national public water system compliance reports, EPA examines SDWIS/FED records of violations of primary drinking water regulations that specify: 1) the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water that is delivered to any user of a public water system (Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL); 2) techniques for treating water to make it safe; 3) monitoring and reporting requirements (how and when water must be tested and

the results reported); and 4) significant user notification violations.<sup>1</sup> While SDWIS/FED collects information on monitoring and reporting violations, only “significant” monitoring and reporting violations are counted in this report. A “significant” monitoring and reporting violation occurs, with rare exceptions, when no samples are taken or no results are reported during a compliance period.

## National Findings

### National PWS Universe Summary

Systems by Size	Number of Systems	Users served
Large Systems	4,103	235,575,036
Medium System	5,109	28,974,008
Small System	147,060	39,611,079
All Sizes	156,182	304,102,891

- 156,182 public water systems together served over 304 million users. The actual number of individuals served was smaller, because millions of Americans drank water from, and were counted as users by, more than one public water system during the course of the year.
- Although most public water systems are small, the larger systems serve the majority of people.

### National PWS Compliance Summary

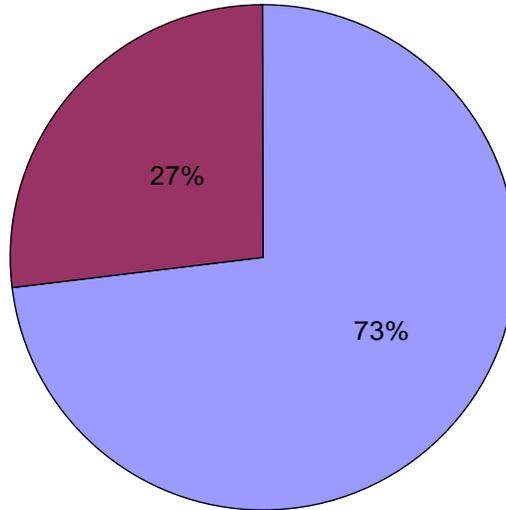
Type of Violation	Number of Systems with Violations	Number of Violations	Users Served
All Violation Types	42,108	128,666	81,466,047
Health-based	11,115	18,637	26,483,028
Monitoring & reporting	29,660	91,077	49,152,615
CCR	7,333	11,346	17,838,339
Public Notification	7,606	7,606	7,266,860

- 93% of America’s 156,182 public water systems (serving 90% of the users) reported no violations of a health-based drinking water standard in 2006.
- The states reported either a health-based violation, a significant monitoring & reporting violation, or a significant CCR violation at 42,108 public water systems in 2006.
- 73% of the population served by public water systems received drinking water from a system that reported no violations of a health-based standard, was not cited for a

<sup>1</sup> This report tabulates only “significant” monitoring and reporting and notification (e.g., CCR) violations. Table A–1 of the National Public Water System Compliance Report presents descriptions of significant monitoring violations for the different drinking water regulations.

significant violation of a monitoring and reporting requirement, and issued a consumer confidence report and public notification, if required.

**Users Served by PWS  
Without Reported Significant Violation**



■ Users Served by PWS without Reported Significant Violation  
 ■ Users Served by PWS with Reported Significant Violation

- Of the 156,182 public water systems nationwide, EPA determined that 14,036 systems were in significant noncompliance for calendar year 2006. Over 90% of the public water systems determined to be in significant non-compliance are small systems serving 3,300 or fewer users.
- In 2006, states and EPA addressed non-compliance at 6,035 public water systems. Additionally the states and EPA addressed 4,157 of the systems with new SNC outside of the 2006 calendar year, leaving 3,844 systems (over 2% of the systems nationally) with unaddressed SNCs.

## National Findings

### PWS Universe Summary in Indian Country

	Number of Systems	Users served
Large Systems	14	291,628
Medium System	45	249,982
Small System	758	388,628
All Sizes	817	930,238

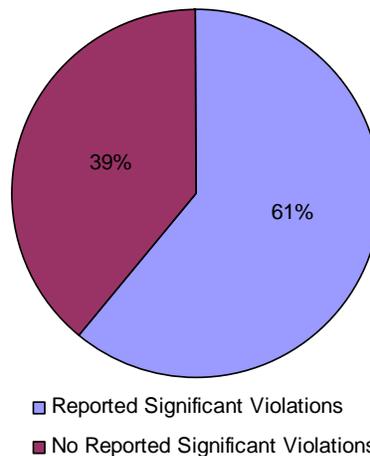
- 817 public water systems in Indian country served 930,238 users. Most are small systems, which serve 3,300 or fewer people.

### PWS Compliance Summary in Indian Country

Type of Violation	Number of Systems with Violations	Number of Violations	Users Served
Any Type of Violation	496	1,936	495,248
Health-based	92	165	111,031
Monitoring & reporting	321	1,076	259,970
CCR	292	691	272,287
Public Notification	4	4	8,171

- 725 (89%) of the 817 public water systems, serving 83% of the users, in Indian country reported no violations of a health-based drinking water standard in 2006.
- 496 (61%) of the 817 public water systems reported health-based or significant reporting violations.

**Systems with Reported Significant Violations**



- Of the 817 public water systems in Indian country, EPA determined that 292 systems were in significant noncompliance with one or more drinking water standards in calendar year 2006. Over 90% of these systems are small systems serving 3,300 or fewer users.
- In 2006, states and EPA addressed non-compliance at 100 public water systems. Additionally the states and EPA addressed 68 of the systems with SNC outside of the 2006 calendar year, leaving 124 systems (over 15% of the systems in Indian country) with unaddressed SNCs.

## Data Quality Summary

The data used in this report came from EPA's national SDWIS/FED database. SDWIS/FED is composed of data that primacy states are required to submit to SDWIS/FED each quarter. EPA periodically conducts data verifications (independent, on-site audits) of primacy state and tribal drinking water programs to ensure that the primacy state is determining compliance in accordance with Federal regulations. EPA's review showed that the quality of the information

the states reported to SDWIS/FED is improving, but the data are incomplete. This finding principally reflects differences between state and EPA regulatory interpretation rather than a preponderance of data management issues.

EPA's analysis of the data verifications found:

- 87% of all inventory data in SDWIS/FED were consistently reported.
- Most of the discrepancies between apparent and reported violations are because violations were not reported by the states into the data system.
- 29% of monitoring and reporting violations had been reported to SDWIS/FED.
- 62% of the MCL/treatment technique violations had been reported to SDWIS/FED.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

Most Americans received water from systems for which the states reported no violations of health-based standards, and for which the states reported no significant violations of monitoring and reporting requirements.

States and EPA should continue working together to address significant violations of drinking water requirements. In addition, EPA should continue to work with its state partners to identify and resolve any problems that may have produced data discrepancies and to ensure that complete and accurate documentation is available. Working closely with the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA), EPA will continue to implement its updated 2006 Data Reliability Analysis and Action Plan (DRAAP). One of the goals is to achieve 90% complete and accurate data for health-based violations, as well as improving the quality of monitoring and reporting violations and inventory data. EPA should continue efforts to modernize the SDWIS database to reduce data quality problems from data entry to transmission in the future.

### **Where is the report available?**

**Electronic:** An electronic version of the report is available on EPA's website containing compliance data and other information about Local Government Services and Operations: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/compliance/resources/reports/accomplishment/sdwa/>.