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EPA issues Safe Drinking Water Act compliance orders in Region 8 Indian country

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EPA issues summary of recent Safe Drinking Water Act compliance orders to protect public health in Region 8 Indian country

Seven Administrative Compliance Orders issued to tribal water systems since December 2020

DENVER (March 2, 2021) - Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 8, announced it entered into seven Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Administrative Orders on Consent (AOCs) with its tribal partners between December 1, 2020 – February 12, 2021. Tribally owned or operated drinking water systems agreed to these AOCs to address violations of the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations to ensure public health protection in Indian country.

“Public drinking water systems must meet federal Safe Drinking Water Act requirements that keep drinking water safe,” **said EPA Acting Regional Administrator Deb Thomas**. “Through these seven orders, EPA is helping ensure that public water systems in Indian country protect the health of their users.”

These AOCs illustrate substantial collaboration between EPA and the Tribes and Tribal utilities. The consensual agreements memorialize enforceable steps, and specific time frames, for drinking water systems to come into compliance with drinking water regulations. They demonstrate EPA and the Tribes’ prioritization of safe drinking water in Indian country.

Prior to negotiating the AOCs, EPA provided the systems extensive compliance assistance. EPA’s compliance assistance varies depending on the needs of each system, but often includes support by phone calls and emails, as well as visits from technical assistance providers.

The seven orders address different violations at each facility and include monitoring violations and violations related to addressing significant deficiencies; failure to notify the public of violations; and failure to prepare and distribute a Consumer Confidence Report to the systems’ customers. EPA continues to work with these systems to address violations of drinking water regulations and ensure public health protection.

Safe Drinking Water Act 1414 negotiated orders were finalized for the following systems:

Bedrock-Babb Water System; Blackfeet Indian Reservation, MT. Order finalized with the Blackfeet Tribe regarding the Bedrock-Babb Water System's uncorrected significant deficiencies and sanitary defect; failure to certify that an annual Consumer Confidence Report was distributed to its customers; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor for lead, copper, and total coliform bacteria.

Blackfoot Public Water System; Blackfeet Indian Reservation, MT. Order finalized with the Blackfeet Tribe regarding the Blackfoot Public Water System's uncorrected significant deficiencies and sanitary defect; failure to deliver the consumer notification of the lead sample results to the persons served at each sample site and submit to EPA a sample copy of the notification; failure to certify that an annual Consumer Confidence Report was distributed to its customers; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor for total coliform bacteria.

Starr School Public Water System; Blackfeet Indian Reservation, MT. Order finalized with the Blackfeet Tribe regarding the Starr School Public Water System's uncorrected significant deficiencies; failure to certify that an annual Consumer Confidence Report was distributed to its customers; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor for lead, copper, and total coliform bacteria.

Heart Butte Public Water System; Blackfeet Indian Reservation, MT. Order finalized with the Blackfeet Tribe regarding the Heart Butte Public Water System's uncorrected significant deficiencies; failure to certify that an annual Consumer Confidence Report was distributed to its customers; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor for lead, copper, and total coliform bacteria.

Arapahoe Industrial Park Public Water System; within the exterior boundaries of the Wind River Reservation, WY. Order finalized with the Northern Arapaho Utilities Department regarding the Arapahoe Industrial Park Public Water System due to uncorrected significant deficiencies; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor total trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, total coliform, and nitrate.

Ethete Water System Public Water System; within the exterior boundaries of the Wind River Reservation, WY. Order finalized with Northern Arapaho Utilities Department regarding the Ethete Water System Public Water System due to uncorrected significant deficiencies; failure to meet the treatment technique requirement for *Giardia lamblia* inactivation; failure to notify the public of certain violations; and failure to monitor lead, copper, total trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, disinfection byproduct precursors, cyanide, volatile organic contaminants, sodium, total coliform, and nitrate.

Fort Belknap Agency Public Water System (System); Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, MT. Order finalized with the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) and Prairie Mountain Utilities (PMU) on February 1, 2021, to address the System's disinfection byproduct (DBP) maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedances and failure to remove the required percentage of total organic carbon between the System's source and finished water.

For more information on the administration of the drinking water program in Indian country in Region 8, [click here](#).

EPA has identified the protection of drinking water as priority as part of the National Compliance Initiative (NCI). EPA's NCI on *Reducing Noncompliance with Drinking Water Standards at Community Water Systems* supports EPA's goal of a 25 percent reduction in the number of community water systems that are out of compliance with health-based standards by the end of FY 2022.

For more information on the NCI visit: [click here](#).

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