



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2011 Wisconsin Act 19
[2011 Assembly Bill 23]

Disinfection of Municipal Water

Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to “establish, administer and maintain a safe drinking water program no less stringent than the requirements of the [federal] safe drinking water act...” [s. 281.17 (8), Stats.] DNR rules require that municipal water systems provide continuous disinfection of drinking water drawn from groundwater or surface water sources. [s. NR 810.09, Wis. Adm. Code.] The requirement that drinking water drawn from surface water be disinfected is based on federal requirements, but there is no federal requirement for the disinfection of drinking water from groundwater sources.

Act 19 specifies that DNR may not require a municipal water system to provide continuous disinfection of the water, unless one of the following conditions applies:

- Continuous disinfection is required under federal law.
- Water quality data, well construction, or water system construction indicates a potential health hazard.

Act 19 also revises the scoring system for safe drinking water loan program projects. Under the safe drinking water loan program, projects are scored based on an extensive list of criteria established in DNR rules. Because Act 19 overrides the existing rule requiring disinfection of groundwater by all municipal water systems, the ability to award points to safe drinking water loan program projects for disinfection of groundwater would be eliminated. To avoid this result, the Act specifies that projects to upgrade public water systems to provide continuous disinfection of drinking water drawn from groundwater must be scored under the loan program in the same manner as projects to install disinfection systems to treat drinking water drawn from surface water.

Effective date: Act 19 takes effect on June 8, 2011.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature’s Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.