



# Drinking Water Fluoridation in Washington State (WAC 246-290-460)

Washington State Board of Health  
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**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



# Department of Health Mission

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We work with others to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington State.



# Overview

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- Background
- Reason for rule making
- Basis for the new U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation
- Process for developing proposed rule
- Summary of public comments

# Background



- Community water systems across the country have been fluoridating for more than 70 years.
- In 2012, more than 210 million Americans, or nearly 75 percent of the population served by public water systems, drank water with optimal fluoride levels.
- Our current rule, WAC 246-290-460, requires that systems maintain concentrations between 0.8 and 1.3 mg/L.

# Reason for Rule Making

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- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) recommendation for community water fluoridation:
  - ✓ The new recommendation is for a single level of 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water (mg/L).
  - ✓ It updates and replaces the 1962 recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/L.

# Basis for New HHS Recommendation

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- Current evidence shows water consumption is consistent across all U.S. temperature zones.
- Sources of fluoride have increased since the early 1960s.

# Process for Developing Proposed Rule

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- The State Board of Health filed a CR-101 to consider revising the rule:
  - ✓ Based on the new HHS recommendation for an optimal fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L.
  - ✓ To add a new notification requirement for water systems.
  - ✓ To make clarifications to monitoring and corrective actions.

# Process for Developing Proposed Rule (cont.)

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- The Department of Health:
  - ✓ Developed draft rule language.
  - ✓ Asked stakeholders and interested parties for comments on the draft rule.
  - ✓ Asked water systems to provide costs of the draft rule.
  - ✓ Briefed the Board in January 2016.

# Process for Developing Proposed Rule (cont.)

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- The State Board of Health:
  - ✓ Filed the CR-102 Proposed rule making, including
    - Proposed rule language; and
    - Significant Analysis.
  - ✓ Notified stakeholders and interested parties to solicit comments.
  - ✓ Written comment period ended February 23, 2016.

# Summary of Comments in Support

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- The Department received comments from 20 people in support of the proposed rule.
- One comment recommends revising the rule to establish an annual average of monthly averages that must either equal 0.7 mg/L or be within the range of 0.6 to 0.8 mg/L.
- The Department recommends the Board adopt the rule as proposed. The Department will provide technical assistance to operate as close as possible to the optimal fluoridation concentration of 0.7 mg/L.

# Summary of Comments Opposed

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- The Department received comments from 12 people requesting the fluoridation standard be 0.0 mg/L.
- The Department recommends the Board adopt the rule as proposed.
  - ✓ Water systems have the authority to fluoridate drinking water.
  - ✓ Setting the fluoridation standard at 0.0 mg/L would, in effect, prohibit fluoridation.
  - ✓ The proposed fluoridation level is safe and effective.

## Summary of Comments Opposed (cont.)

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The Department received one recommendation to set the operational range at 0.3 mg/L to 0.7 mg/L.

- The Department recommends the Board adopt the rule as proposed. The proposed operational range provides an effective concentration of fluoride while allowing a reasonable margin of operating tolerance.

## Summary of Comments Opposed (cont.)

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The Department received additional comments from 3 people with multiple suggestions for amendment of the proposed rule. These suggestions were previously submitted to the Board as petitions for rule making.

- The Department recommends the Board adopt the rule as proposed. The Board has already formally considered and denied these recommendations.

# Next Steps

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- File CR-103 (if proposed rule adopted) – April 2016.
- Send final Concise Explanatory Statement to commenters.
- Rule effective date – 31 days after filing.
- Prepare for implementation:
  - ✓ Modify technical assistance materials.
  - ✓ Implement a fluoride treatment optimization program for water systems that choose to fluoridate.

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# Questions?

