

# Accurate News

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## Drinking Water In the Spotlight

by George Drye, Lab Manager

Over the last few years the EPA has been slowly shifting emphasis from wastewater to drinking water quality. Many new rules have been proposed during this time. One of the most recent is the *Information Collection Rule*, or *ICR*. This rule was proposed in February of 1994 and will be taking effect in the near future. It will probably impact all drinking water systems eventually but the first systems to have to deal with it are those serving 100,000 or more. For the most part this rule deals with disinfection byproducts (DBPs) and the factors that cause their formation.

The ICR is going to force many cities to look at things they have never had to consider before. Just the names of some of these tests sound confusing...Haloacetic Acids, Oxyhalides, TOC, THMs, all sound like something out of a nightmare chemistry course. Indeed, many of these tests are very new and there are few laboratories that have experience with them. Accurate, Inc. has been working diligently over the last year to prepare for these tests by purchasing the proper equipment, training personnel, and developing these exotic methods.

The EPA has decided to certify laboratories directly for this work instead of relying on the states as they have in the past. They have already begun the process by issuing check samples as part of a Performance Evaluation which will be necessary for certification. We are proud to be one of only 65 laboratories in the United States to have participated in the first study.

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As I write we are preparing to analyze the second batch of ICR PE samples! If you anticipate having to be involved in the ICR we would love to hear from you as far in advance as possible. This will help us plan better, and thus support your needs better.

## **PLANNING for the ICR**

“The ICR...will provide data to support further regulatory development for the proposed Disinfection Byproducts Rule and the Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule. Consequently, the development of valid, representative data is crucial to the success of future rule-making process. Considering the importance of the ICR effort, however, the time allowed for the preparation is limited. Because of the complexity of the sampling and analytical programs...and potential treatability studies, it is crucial that utilities begin final planning now.

A utility has reasonable control over the operational component,...but the analytical component, however, is much less tractable.

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Therefore, if a utility is using a contract laboratory, it is critical that utility staff members be thoroughly familiar with the laboratory's capabilities and requirements. The...USEPA...intends to develop a list of approved laboratories in time for utilities to select laboratories and execute contracts. The list may not be available until June 1995, though, and samples must be collected and analyzed beginning in October 1995. Therefore, utilities should approach existing laboratories now to determine whether the laboratories intend to gain approval status. If the answer is no, the utility must evaluate other alternatives. State regulatory agencies and other water industry professionals can suggest reliable laboratories..."-- by Douglas M. Owen, *Planning for the ICR*, Journal AWWA, excerpts, Volume 87, No.2, February 1995, p.68-75

### May we offer you suggestions?

Here are a few suggestions for utilities by Douglas Owen for successful planning and implementing the ICR based on his article.

- *Appoint an ICR coordinator*, and give the person overall responsibility for the activities.
- *Convene planning sessions* to familiarize all participating staff members with the ICR and its overall requirements and specific and individual tasks required.
- *Evaluate your treatment plant sampling requirements*. Clarify sampling procedures as soon as possible.
- *Approach existing contract laboratories to determine whether they intend to gain approval status*.

- *Set your own laboratory performance criteria* before you choose a laboratory. When the laboratory is selected, the utility should take the opportunity to *perform sampling and conduct analyses prior to ICR monitoring*. If in-house lab capabilities exist, it may be possible for the utility to *split samples to gain an additional level of confidence*.



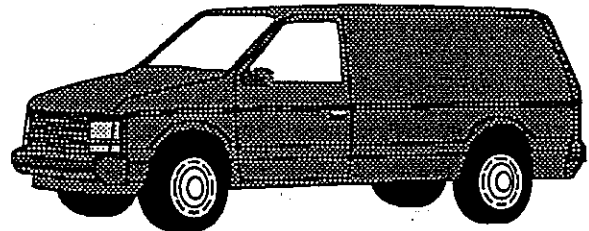
### From the Editor's Desk:

Since the ICR is such a new and important subject, we will try to keep you informed and up to date. Look for further updates in the next *Accurate News*. We would like to hear from you, especially any comments regarding this newsletter. Let us know what environmental issues you would like to see featured in our next editions. Your comments, ideas, and suggestions are always welcomed! 'Til the next *Accurate News*.

Maria de L. Nordberg, Editor in Chief and  
Marketing Manager



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