EPA
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Best Practices Factsheet: Consumer Confidence Report

Each community water system (CWS) provides an annual water quality report to its customers. This annual water quality report is also called a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR includes a variety of important information about a CWS, including the drinking water source, any monitored contaminants found in drinking water, and whether a CWS meets state and federal drinking water standards. The CCR is an opportunity for CWSs to communicate with their customers and raise awareness about the source of their drinking water. CCRs also give information that allows customers to make better decisions about their health.

A CWS must deliver its CCR to customers by July 1st of each year. It must also make a good faith effort to deliver the CCR to consumers who do not directly pay water bills. This factsheet is intended to help CWSs design CCRs that better educate customers about their drinking water. It contains recommended best practices regarding the design, look and information in a CCR (Part 1). It also includes tips for successful CCR electronic delivery (Part 2). Better designed CCRs delivered in the way a customer prefers shows a CWS's commitment to both public health and the public's right-to-know. A well-designed CCR can help a CWS educate its customers about this essential service and promote involvement in protecting their drinking water.

This factsheet is divided into two sections: Part 1 describes best practices for presenting an effective CCR; Part 2 describes helpful tips for launching and maintaining a CCR electronic delivery program.

Part 1 Developing Your CCR

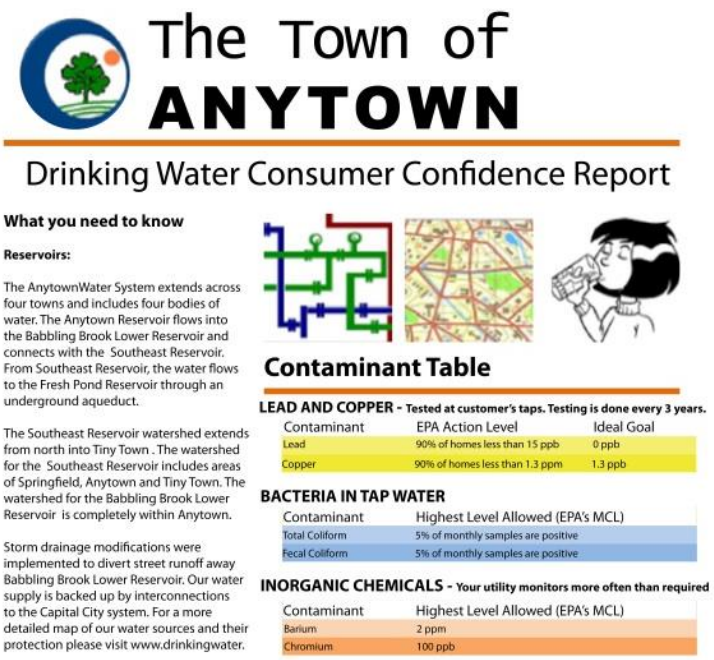
This section describes recommended best practices for presenting required elements and other useful information in your CCR.

What Information Is Required in a CCR?

There are eight elements that must be included in a CCR. These eight elements are the minimum information that every CCR must contain, and include:

1. Water system information (name and phone number of a contact person; information on public participation opportunities)
2. Source(s) of water
3. Definitions
4. Detected contaminant table
5. Information on monitoring for *Cryptosporidium*, radon and other contaminants (if detected)
6. Compliance with National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (for example, explanation of violations, potential health effects, and corrective action steps; special notices for Ground Water Rule and Revised Total Coliform Rule)
7. If applicable, variances or exemptions (for example, under certain conditions the state or EPA may have granted permission not to meet an maximum contaminant level [MCL] or a treatment technique)
8. Required additional information (such as, explanation of contaminants in drinking water and bottled water; information to vulnerable populations about *Cryptosporidium;* statements on nitrate, lead and arsenic.)

Figure 1. Example CCR of the Town of Anytown.



The Town of ANYTOWN

Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report

What you need to know

Reservoirs:

The AnytownWater System extends across four towns and includes four bodies of water. The Anytown Reservoir flows into the Babbling Brook Lower Reservoir and connects with the Southeast Reservoir. From Southeast Reservoir, the water flows to the Fresh Pond Reservoir through an underground aqueduct.

The Southeast Reservoir watershed extends from north into Tiny Town . The watershed for the Southeast Reservoir includes areas of Springfield, Anytown and Tiny Town. The watershed for the Babbling Brook Lower Reservoir is completely within Anytown.

Storm drainage modifications were implemented to divert street runoff away Babbling Brook Lower Reservoir. Our water supply is backed up by interconnections to the Capital City system. For a more detailed map of our water sources and their protection please visit www.drinkingwater.

Contaminant Table

LEAD AND COPPER - Tested at customer's taps. Testing is done every 3 years.

Contaminant	EPA Action Level	Ideal Goal
Lead	90% of homes less than 15 ppb	0 ppb
Copper	90% of homes less than 1.3 ppm	1.3 ppb

BACTERIA IN TAP WATER

Contaminant	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)
Total Coliform	5% of monthly samples are positive
Fecal Coliform	5% of monthly samples are positive

INORGANIC CHEMICALS - Your utility monitors more often than required

Contaminant	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)
Barium	2 ppm
Chromium	100 ppb

What Else Should I Consider Including in My CCR?

The purpose of the CCR is to provide customers with information about their CWS that helps them make informed choices about their drinking water. The required eight elements probably do not cover everything you do to provide safe drinking water and to protect your customers' health. Below is a list of ideas to consider including in your CCR. Consider your audience when writing these optional CCR sections. Use words that are clear and easy to understand; try not to use technical terms or acronyms. You want to be sure that your customers learn about their CWS when they read their CCR and are satisfied with the service provided.

Tips: Things to consider including in your CCR

1. An explanation or diagram of your CWS's treatment processes. Photographs or schematics could be used as well, so customers understand how the treatment process helps ensure their water meets drinking water standards.
2. Additional information on where your source water is geographically located (for example, maps, pictures of sources as seen in Figure 2). Explain why the protection of these areas is vital to public health protection.
3. A brief summary statement about the quality of your drinking water. Not everyone will have time to read the whole CCR, so be sure that the big message gets across right away.
4. Water conservation tips (for example, benefits of WaterSense products, rain barrel programs, irrigation timers, etc.). These tips can help remind your customer that water is a precious resource.
5. The cost of making the water safe to drink, including the cost of maintaining your infrastructure, so customers understand what their water bill is covering.
6. Information about efforts you may have made to promote "green infrastructure" (for example, Figure 3 shows a picture of stormwater pollution prevention measures). This shows you are active in preserving water quality as well; it's a team effort.
7. A statement from the mayor, town administrator or general manager describing the importance of the CCR and the hard work the CWS does every day to provide safe and reliable drinking water. People take notice when their public servant takes notice.
8. Information to educate customers about water quality concerns in their service area (for example, taste and odor issues, cross connections). You can show that you are hearing their concerns from your customer service representatives and working to address these issues.
9. Photos that illustrate people enjoying their water or people taking actions that you want your customers to copy. Include pictures of consumers drinking water and be sure to include their faces and eyes in the photos. For example, if you are asking customers to limit the amount of time they water their lawns by using a sprinkler timer, then show a photo of someone adjusting their sprinkler timer (see Figure 4). If there was a trash clean-up in your watershed, include before and after photos of people with trash bags to show how much impact the clean-up had.

Figure 2. Source of our drinking water.

Figure 3. Stormwater drain to promote "green infrastructure."

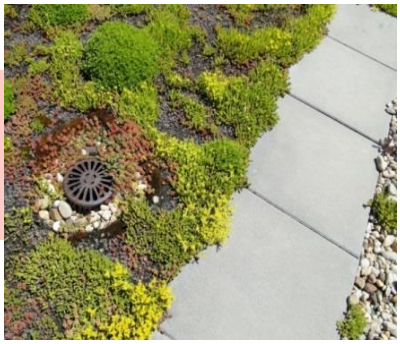


Figure 4. Adjusting a sprinkler system.

10. Highlight improvements your CWS made throughout the year to ensure a safe, reliable supply of drinking water, (for example, efforts taken to reduce water leakage). You may instill confidence in your customers that ongoing maintenance is ensuring the high quality of their drinking water.
11. Information and images about how your CWS is protecting the environment (for example, Figure 5 shows the installation of solar panels at the CWS, initiating a recycling program). Your customers will appreciate that you are trying to be green.
12. Introduce the staff of your CWS by highlighting one person each year, or include pictures of your operators fixing pipes. You can also include an "employee spotlight" on your website to show the public that the staff of the CWS are regular hard working people just like the rest of the community.

Figure 5. Solar panels reducing energy cost at the water treatment system.

The tips above are intended to help you help your customers appreciate their drinking water as the significantly valuable resource it is and the work you do to protect and manage this resource.

Using Photos

Well-placed, high quality photos can add visual depth and personal context to your CCR. Remember to follow copyright protocols to ensure legal use of the images in your CCR. Consider using photos you have taken of your watershed and infrastructure. If someone else took a photo you wish to include, or if anyone is in the photo, be sure to obtain their written permission before using the image. Pay attention to usage rights of any photo you find online to ensure that they are publicly available for use, and avoid using images that show brand names in your CCR.

What Are Best Practices for Creating a CCR Contaminant Table?

One required element of the CCR is the detected regulated contaminants table (or tables). You should present these results in the table so that your customers will understand them. Figure 6 incorporates best practices from CCRs across the country.

Figure 6. CCR Detected Regulated Contaminants Table showing best practices.

LEAD AND COPPER - Tested at customer's taps. Testing is done every 3 years.						
Contaminant	**EPA's Action Level**	**Ideal Goal (EPA's MCLG)**	**90% of Test Levels Were Less Than**	**# of Tests With Levels Above EPA's Action Level**	**Violation**	**Typical Sources**
Lead	90% of homes less than 15 ppb	0 ppb	5.8 ppb	2 out of 92	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing
Copper	90% of homes less than 1.3 ppm	1.3 ppm	0.32 ppm	1 out of 92	NO	Corrosion of household plumbing
INORGANIC CHEMICALS						
Contaminant	**Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)**	**Ideal Goal (EPA's MCLG)**	**Highest Result**	**Range of Test Results**	**Violation**	**Typical Sources**
Barium	2 ppm	2 ppm	2.5 ppm	0.022 - 2.5 ppm	YES	Discharges from drilling wastes
Chromium	100 ppb	100 ppb	2 ppb	0 - 2 ppb	NO	Discharge from steel or pulp mills
Fluoride	2 ppm*	2 ppm*	0.76 ppm	0.69 - 0.76 ppm	NO	Erosion of natural deposits or water additive
Nitrate	10 ppm	10 ppm	3.8 ppm	0.730 - 3.8 ppm	NO	Runoff from fertilizer use
BACTERIA IN TAP WATER						
Contaminant	**Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)**	**Ideal Goal (EPA's MCLG)**	**Highest Monthly Percentage of Samples With Total Coliform Present**		**Violation**	**Typical Sources**
Total Coliform (for systems that collect ≥40 samples/month)	5% of monthly samples are positive	0	0.60%		NO	Naturally present in the environment
Contaminant	**Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)**	**Ideal Goal (EPA's MCLG)**	**Highest Monthly Number of Samples Containing Total Coliform**		**Violation**	**Typical Sources**
Total Coliform (for systems that collect <40 samples/month)	1 sample contains total coliform	0	2		YES	Naturally present in the environment
*EPA's MCL and MCLG is 4 ppm, but [STATE] has set a lower MCL and MCLG which improves public health protection.						
How to Read the Water Quality Data Table EPA establishes the safe drinking water regulations that limit the amount of contaminants allowed in drinking water. The table shows the concentrations of detected substances in comparison to regulatory limits. Substances not detected are not included in the table.						
Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL): The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.						
Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.						
Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a system must follow.						
Units in the Table: ppm is parts per million (or 1 drop in 1 million gallons), ppb is parts per billion (or 1 drop in 1 billion gallons)						

Health Effects

Barium: Some people who drink water containing barium in excess of the MCL over many years could experience an increase in their blood pressure.

Total Coliform: Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.

1. **A violation column** – Many CWSs provide a violation column so that customers can easily identify contaminants that were above drinking water standards.

2. **A legible font** – Use text that does not contain calligraphy (for example, Times New Roman, Arial or equivalent). Center all columns except for the Contaminant column. This makes your CCR easier to read.

3. **Color** – Shade each row to make the table easier to read. Try alternating shades of the same base color in each table or contaminant category. Pick colors so that the CCR can be easily viewed in all formats. For example, printed in black and white. Use color combinations that someone who is colorblind can see (such as, avoid red and green combinations).

4. **More stringent state standards** – Identify instances where your state has set a more stringent drinking water standard than federal standards.

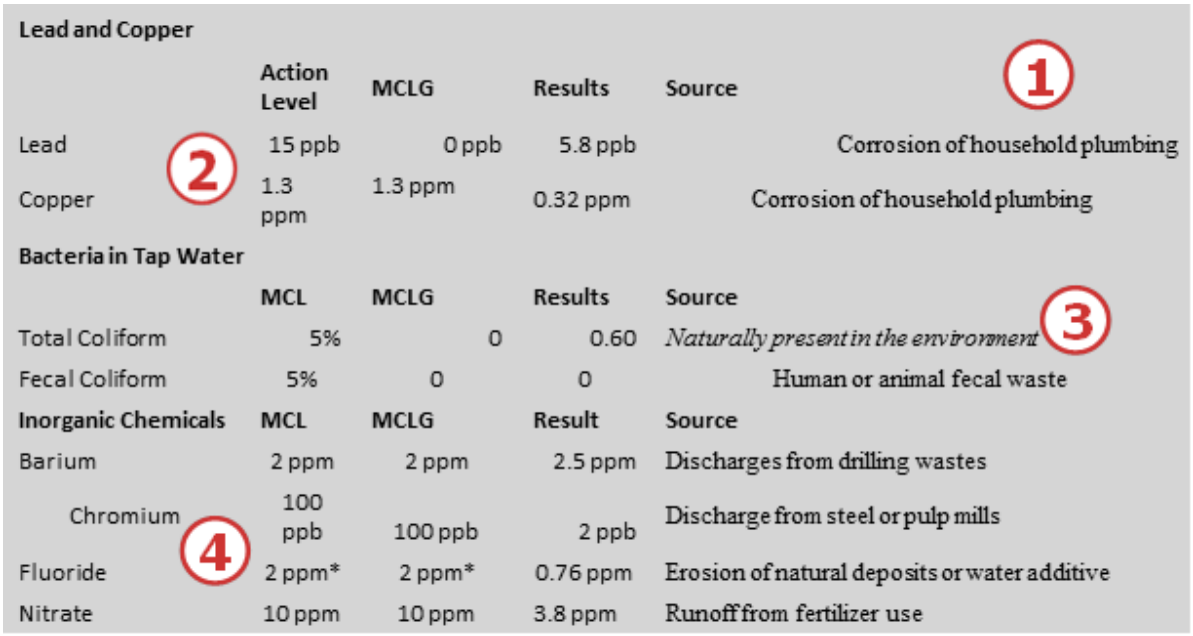
5. **Additional information** – In addition to using the required terms, also use "plain English." For example, use "Highest Level Allowed" in addition to "Maximum Contaminant Level." The goal is to express information clearly.

6. **A "Table Key"** – Include a table key on the same page as the table if possible. Remember, required definitions such as the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) and Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) must be included.

What to Avoid When Creating a CCR Contaminant Table?

You want your CCR contaminant table to be eye-catching, easy to read and understandable.

Figure 7. Example CCR Contaminant Table that needs improvement.



Lead and Copper	Action Level	MCLG	Results	Source
Lead	15 ppb	0 ppb	5.8 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing
Copper	1.3 ppm	1.3 ppm	0.32 ppm	Corrosion of household plumbing

Bacteria in Tap Water	MCL	MCLG	Results	Source
Total Coliform	5%	0	0.60	*Naturally present in the environment*
Fecal Coliform	5%	0	0	Human or animal fecal waste

Inorganic Chemicals	MCL	MCLG	Result	Source
Barium	2 ppm	2 ppm	2.5 ppm	Discharges from drilling wastes
Chromium	100 ppb	100 ppb	2 ppb	Discharge from steel or pulp mills
Fluoride	2 ppm*	2 ppm*	0.76 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits or water additive
Nitrate	10 ppm	10 ppm	3.8 ppm	Runoff from fertilizer use

Where Do I Find More Information?

The following resources are available to help you prepare your CCR. Remember, many of these information sources present only "what is required." The practices in this factsheet can enhance your CCR for your customers. These resources may be found at http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/ccr/index.cfm.

1. Do not select background colors or graphics that make the table text hard to see or lead the eye away from the text.
2. Do not leave out gridlines or other visual organizing elements.
3. Do not mix font sizes and styles within one category of information.
4. Do not mix text alignments within one column of information.

- EPA's CCR Unit Conversion Factsheet (April 2015)
- EPA's Preparing Your Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report (April 2010).
- EPA's CCR Rule: Quick Reference Guide (August 2009).
- EPA's Talking to Your Customers about Chronic Contaminants in Drinking Water (October 2007).
- EPA's Compliance Help/Tools for CWSs.
- EPA's CCRiWriter. This online application enables you to produce a regulation compliant CCR.

Part 2 Delivering Your CCR

In January 2013, EPA released a memo describing regulatory requirements for directly delivering a CCR to bill paying customers electronically. This section describes what EPA considers direct delivery of the CCR as well as recommendations for how to launch, maintain and electronically deliver CCRs to bill-paying customers.

What Is Considered Direct Delivery?

The CCR Rule generally requires each CWS to mail or otherwise directly deliver one copy of its CCR to each customer annually. In addition, the CWS must make a good faith effort to reach customers who do not get water bills, for example, apartment dwellers.

What is electronic delivery?

Electronic delivery encompasses various delivery methods that include: email, posting a CCR on a public website and mail notification of the posting. There are specific requirements for electronic delivery of CCRs.

1. Similar to delivering a copy of the CCR through the mail, electronic delivery must provide the CCR in a manner that is "direct." The EPA interprets this CCR Rule requirement to mean that CWSs can use other mailings, such as paper billing statements featuring a prominently displayed and explained direct website address (or URL) to the CCR, to meet their CCR delivery requirement. Each year, the CWS must also provide a method (for example contact phone number) for a customer to request a paper copy of the CCR.

2. If a CWS is aware of a customer's inability to receive a CCR by the chosen electronic method, it must provide the CCR by an alternative method allowed by the CCR Rule.

What Delivery Methods Does EPA Consider to be "Direct"?

There are six CCR delivery methods that EPA has identified as meeting the "direct delivery" requirement, so long as the system is providing the report directly to each customer. These are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Approved CCR Delivery Methods

CCR Delivery Method	Method Description
1. Mail - paper copy	CWS mails a paper copy of the CCR to each bill-paying customer.
2. Mail - notification that CCR is available on website	CWS mails to each bill-paying customer a notification that the CCR is available and provides a direct URL to the CCR where it can be viewed. A URL that navigates to a Web page that requires a customer to search for the CCR does not meet the "directly deliver" requirement. The mail method used for notification may be, but is not limited to, a postcard, water bill insert, statement on the water bill or community newsletter.
3. Email – direct URL to CCR [1]	CWS emails to each bill-paying customer a direct URL to the CCR on a publicly available site on the Internet. A URL that navigates to a Web page that requires a customer to search for the CCR does not meet the "directly deliver" requirement.
4. Email – CCR sent as an attachment to the email [1]	CWS emails to each bill-paying customer the CCR as an electronic file email attachment (for example, PDF).

CCR Delivery Method	Method Description
5. Email – CCR sent as an embedded image in an email [1]	CWS emails to each bill-paying customer the CCR text and tables inserted into the body of an email (not as an attachment).
6. Additional electronic delivery that meets "otherwise directly deliver" requirement [2]	CWS delivers CCR through a method that otherwise directly delivers to each bill-paying customer and in coordination with the state.

[1] This method may only be used for customers when a CWS has a valid email address to deliver the CCR electronically.
[2] This category is intended to encompass methods or technologies not included above. CWSs considering new methods or technologies should consult with their state to ensure it meets the intent of "otherwise directly deliver.

A CWS will need to use a combination of delivery methods to reach all customers.

How Does Outreach Help Me with CCR Delivery?

You should perform outreach to your customers prior to electronic delivery each year. *This is especially important if you currently deliver a paper CCR to each of your customers through the mail and will begin electronic delivery for the first time.* Outreach is different than notifying your customers that the CCR is available on a Website, or an email with the CCR as an attachment. Outreach occurs before the CCR is delivered. It lets you inform customers of your CCR delivery method plans and to receive feedback on how your customers prefer to receive their CCR.

Communicating with your customers that your CCR delivery methods will include electronic delivery creates greater transparency between you and your customers. It shows your customer that you want them to be aware of the CCR and to read it.

Outreach vs. Delivery?

Outreach is when a CWS contacts customers to tell them that they will be changing the delivery format of their CCR, or asking the customer's opinion about delivery. This can be done at any time and there are no regulatory requirements surrounding outreach.

Delivery is the regulatory requirement to directly deliver the CCR to all bill-paying customers and make a good-faith effort at reaching non bill-paying consumers. There are specific requirements associated with direct delivery. For more information see EPA's 2013 CCR Delivery Options Memo.

An example of an outreach method is to send your customers postcards with information about the upcoming electronic delivery of the CCR. You may want to include information such as when the CCR will be available and where it will be located.

Tips: Mailing a Direct URL

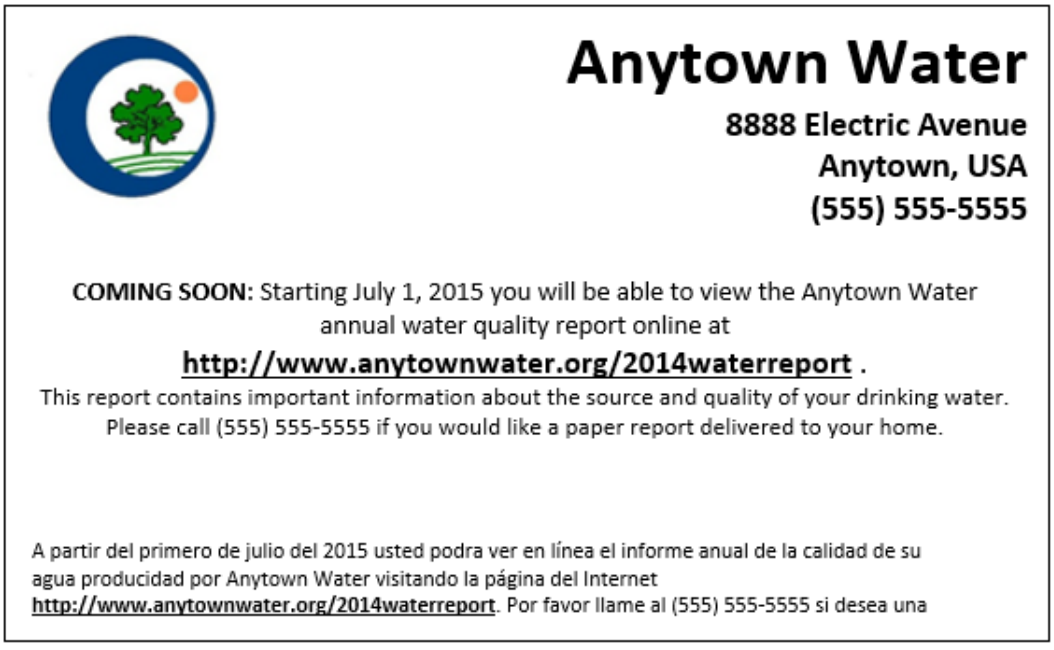
The URL must provide a direct link to the CCR and the link must take the customer to the entire CCR so that the customer does not have to navigate to another Web page to find any required CCR content.

- The URL must direct the consumer to the current CCR posted. A list of various CCRs, including a list of historical of CCRs, does not meet the "direct delivery" requirement.
- A shortened URL can make customer access easier and can be accomplished through a third-party shortening service that creates a website alias or redirect.
- When using a third-party to create a shortened URL, notify your customers and familiarize them with the URL.
- A long URL increases the chances for customers to incorrectly type the URL and could discourage customers to enter the URL.

Helpful Hint

Most website hosting companies allow you to track website hits and length of stay. The number of hits will tell you if your outreach campaign alerting customers to the existence of your electronic CCR and website is a success or not. If hits are too low, you may want to increase not only your outreach efforts but your outreach methods as well. If your electronic CCR and website hits are high, but people are only staying for five seconds, this may indicate that your site is not engaging or it is too hard to find information. You may wish to work with your IT staff to improve the look and navigation of your electronic CCR and website.

Figure 8. Sample outreach postcard delivered before the direct URL has any information posted.



Anytown Water

8888 Electric Avenue
Anytown, USA
(555) 555-5555

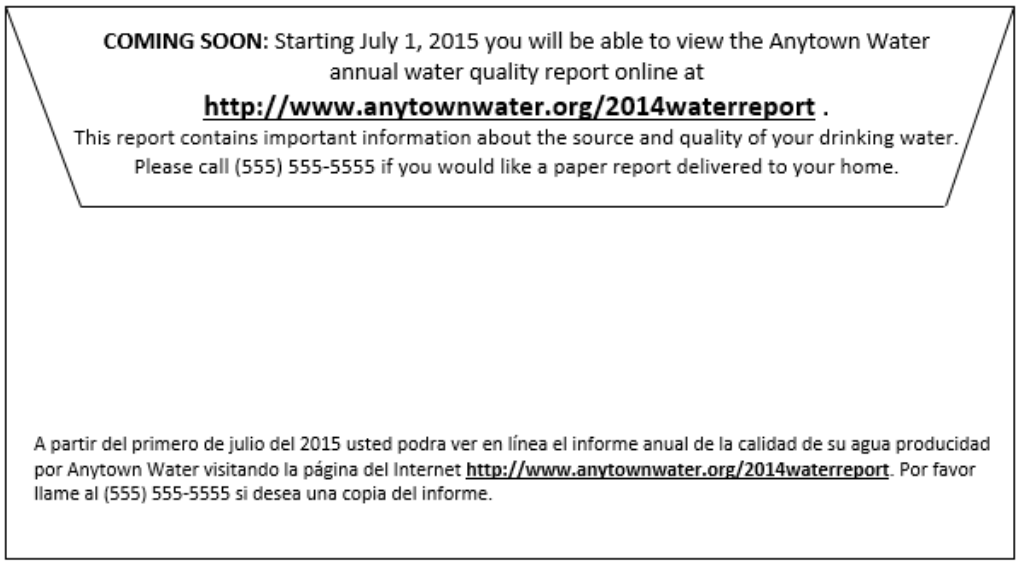
COMING SOON: Starting July 1, 2015 you will be able to view the Anytown Water annual water quality report online at

http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport .

This report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water. Please call (555) 555-5555 if you would like a paper report delivered to your home.

A partir del primero de julio del 2015 usted podra ver en línea el informe anual de la calidad de su agua producidad por Anytown Water visitando la página del Internet http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport. Por favor llame al (555) 555-5555 si desea una

Figure 9. An example of an outreach message on the back of an envelope from the CWS alerting customers that the CCR will be available online.



Another outreach method is to include a message on billing statements or the outside of envelopes that the CCR will be available.

As shown in Figure 9, since the URL is being shared as a part of outreach efforts, the URL does not need to link to your CCR just yet. That is why the phrase "Coming Soon" is used on the envelope. You are not just limited to these two examples in your outreach efforts. The more outreach you do, employing a variety of methods, the greater the chance of reaching your customers. **Note – if the URL does not have the current CCR posted when sending out a link, it is not considered direct delivery and does not satisfy the delivery requirement for the CCR Rule.**

Other outreach methods could include:

- Social media
- Newspaper article
- Notice on website
- Message sent through a reverse calling system
- Article in your CWS newsletter
- Handouts at community events
- Email to all e-billing customers
- Radio ads

By informing your customers of the change to (or addition of) electronic delivery of the CCR it may ease their transition knowing you still want them to read their CCR. Remember, outreach efforts are different than, and do not replace, CCR delivery requirements.

If the most current CCR is not linked to the URL that is being mailed out then you are not meeting the direct delivery regulatory requirement.

Figure 10. Example of a water bill.

Annual Water Quality Report

In 2014, Anytown Water detected 53 contaminants in the drinking water and 5 of them were above the EPA accepted level for drinking water. Please go to http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport.pdf to view your 2011 annual water quality report and learn more about your drinking water. This report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water. For a translation of the water quality report or to speak with someone about the report please call (555) 555-5555. If you would like a paper copy of the 2014 Annual Water Quality Report mailed to your home, please call (555) 555-5555.

Durante el año 2014 la empresa de agua Anytown detecto 53 contaminantes regulados en el agua potable. Cinco de los contaminantes detectados en el agua potable reflejaron niveles que exceden los límites legales establecidos por la EPA. Para accede al mas reciente reporte annual de calidad de agua y para mas informacion acerca de su agua potable puede visitar http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport.pdf. El reporte anual contiene valiosa información acerca de las fuentes de abasto y calidad de su agua potable. Para obtener una traducción del reporte de calidad de agua o para preguntas acerca del reporte por favor comunique se al (555) 555-5555. Si desea obtener a través del correo una copia de su más reciente reporte de calidad de agua

CHARGES (SEE REVERSE FOR DESCRIPTIONS)	
WATER RATES - ESTABLISHED BY ANYTOWN WATER	
SERVICE CHARGE	8.35
WATER USAGE CHARGE 8 X 2.16	17.28
SUBTOTAL ANYTOWN WATER	$25.63
SEWER RATES - ESTABLISHED BYHEALTHY COUNTY GOVERNMENT	
SEWER BASE CHARGE	5.50
SEWER USAGE CHARGE 8 X 6.55	52.40
SUBTOTAL HEALTHY COUNTY	$57.90
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	$83.53

What Are Best Practices and Important Considerations for CCR Electronic Delivery?

The tips below will help you to ensure successful electronic delivery of CCRs. These tips have been arranged under the broad categories of Before You Begin, Content Considerations and Email Tips.

Tips: Before You Begin

1. As noted above, consider conducting customer outreach to inform them of the option for electronic delivery. Your customers' preferred delivery methods should be assessed prior to beginning electronic delivery. Not all customers have Internet access and even if a customer has Internet access he or she may still want to receive a paper copy of the CCR.
2. To ensure delivery to every bill-paying customer, you may need to implement a combination of paper and electronic delivery. Start the development of your CCR early and coordinate with other departments in your organization that may be involved (for example, Information Technology (IT) and billing departments). Customers likely will have questions about electronic delivery, and personnel in all departments will need to have the same information to share with customers. IT staff may need plenty of time to develop a website to accommodate the posting of your CCR.

EPA's CCR Delivery Options Memo (January 2013) contains information to help assess which type of CCR delivery program is best for your CWS.

Tips: Content Considerations

1. When using a mail notification method with a direct URL (for example, on a water bill), you should display the direct URL on every mailing throughout the year.

2. If you mail a direct URL to customers, consider including a check box on every mailing (see Figure 11), similar to a change of address or pay by credit card option, so that a customer can elect to continue receiving a paper CCR. Be sure to coordinate with the billing department to note those customers who would like to continue receiving a paper CCR so that one can be sent as soon as possible.

Figure 11. Checkbox for customers to elect to continue receiving a paper CCR.

Please check the box if you would prefer a paper copy of your annual water quality report delivered to your home.
Por favor, haga una marca en el encasillado si prefiere recibir a través del correo una copia de su más reciente reporte de calidad de agua. ☐

3. As noted above, the direct URL should be displayed in typeface that is at least as large as the largest type on the billing statement or other notification. You should also create a short, easy-to-type URL. This sounds easy, but if your CWS does not have its own website, this could be challenging. For example, if you will be posting your electronic CCR on your Web page which is on your municipality's website, the URL could become quite long. One thing to consider is a website alias or redirect, which can be obtained through a shortening service. This allows you to have a short, easy-to-remember URL that actually takes your customer to the Web page with the longer URL. An example of this is http://epa.gov/watersecurity which takes you to the much longer URL http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/index.cfm.

4. When sending a direct URL notification or email attachment, include a short message to encourage readership of the CCR (see Figure 12). Remember, the purpose of the CCR is to inform customers about the quality of their drinking water and to raise customers' awareness of where their drinking water comes from and what it takes to deliver water to their home, as well as the importance of protecting drinking water sources. This message is different than the required explanation of the URL, which tells your customer that the URL links to the current CCR. This short message should tell them why they should read the CCR.

Helpful Hint

Once a customer requests a paper or electronic CCR, keep a record of this delivery preference for future CCR deliveries. For those who select paper, you may still wish to ask them at least once a year if that is still their preference. This customer may get Internet access or sign up for an email account in the future, and it would be good to remind them of the electronic delivery option.

Figure 12. Direct URL notification, including a short message to encourage readership of the CCR.

In 2014, Anytown Water detected 53 contaminants in the drinking water and 5 of them were above the EPA accepted level for drinking water. The Anytown annual water quality report is available online at **http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport.pdf**.

Durante el año 2014 Anytown Water detectó 53 contaminantes regulados en el agua potable. Cinco de los contaminantes detectados en el agua potable reflejaron niveles que exceden los límites legales establecidos por la EPA. Puede ver en línea el informe anual de la calidad del agua de Anytown Water visitando la página del Internet: **http://www.anytownwater.org/2014waterreport.pdf**.

5. You may want to prepare your CCR in a format (for example, PDF) that can be delivered both electronically and on paper. This decreases the burden of creating two versions for delivery. Try to make the file size as small as practicable if you are planning on delivering it by email.

6. The CCR could also provide links to other, non-required information on the Internet that all customers can visit for more information. This information can be used to encourage your customers to opt for electronic delivery of their CCR. Advertise the fact that your customers can find out much more about their CWS by receiving their CCR electronically or by visiting your website.

7. If you are required to have information in your CCR in different languages based on a large portion of non-English speaking residents, you should also consider including any outreach information in the other languages.

Tips: Using Email

1. Notify customers early to add your email address to their "safe sender" list to avoid the CCR being classified as junk mail or being removed by spam filters. Many spam filters look for embedded image emails and reject them, especially if the sender is not on the recipient's "safe sender" list.

2. If you send the CCR via email and receive a message that the email bounced back, be prepared to send the CCR by an allowable alternative means. This means customers may need to be called to verify email addresses. If a customer no longer has an active email account, this should be noted in your records and a paper CCR mailed to them.

3. Consider your CWS's capacity to send large volumes of email and whether a third-party is needed to manage the delivery of the CCR. Be sure to update your email database regularly throughout the year to make sure emails are up-to-date so that when you send the CCR you do not get many bounce-backs.

4. Track how many emails are opened to help measure the success of your CCR's electronic delivery. Statistics you may wish to track include the open rate (percentage of customers that opened the email), opened (number of customers that opened the email more than once), and forward opens (how many times the email was forwarded). You will want to coordinate with your IT department ahead of time to capture these statistics. Depending on your email service provider, open statistics will vary. You may need to contract with an outside provider to obtain this information.

5. Electronic bill and auto-pay customers may not open or may ignore their billing statements. Therefore, to ensure that your customer is aware that the email they are receiving is not the bill or notice of payment, you should send a separate email (with a CCR-related subject line) to inform your customers of the availability of the CCR each year. You may want to send more than one email to ensure that the message is received.

What Are the Top Ten Things to Remember When Utilizing Electronic Delivery?

1. Delivery is your responsibility! A CWS must certify distribution of the CCR to all customers to their primacy agency. CWSs will need to use a combination of delivery methods to best reach customers in their service area.
2. Know your customer base! Customer surveys show preferences are split between wanting electronic versus mail delivery of the CCR. Be sure to communicate with your customers to find out their preferences.
3. Give customers a heads up and an option! Inform customers of the change in delivery approach before beginning electronic delivery of your CCR to customers. Remember that it is a requirement to include an option for customers to elect to receive a paper CCR.
4. Tell everyone, all the time! A CWS mailing a direct URL should display the direct URL on all mailings.
5. Know your costs! You may not see delivery savings in the first year, and it may take a few years for people to become comfortable with electronic delivery and to maximize participation.
6. Catch your customers' attention! Include a short message in outreach and notification materials to encourage readership of the CCR.
7. Be aware of email pitfalls! If an email bounces back, resend the CCR by an allowable alternative means. Keep email databases up-to-date.
8. Make it bold! Make it short! The direct URL should be in typeface that is at least as large as the largest type on the billing statement or other mailing notification. You should also create a short, easy-to-type direct URL.
9. Keep a record! Remember your customers' delivery preferences for future CCR deliveries.
10. Remind auto-pay customers! To ensure that e-bill and auto-pay customers are aware of their CCR, a CWS should send a separate CCR notification email.

Where Do I Find More Information?

The following resources are available to assist you in developing a CCR electronic delivery program. These resources may be found at http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/ccr/index.cfm.

- EPA's CCR Delivery Options Memo (January 2013).
- EPA's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Rule Retrospective Review Summary (December 2012).
- Where You Live: Your Drinking Water Quality Reports Online. EPA publicly accessible database of CCR hosted websites.

Disclaimer

This document provides guidance and contains EPA's current policy recommendations for complying with the CCR Rule. Throughout this document, the terms "state" and "states" are used to refer to all types of primacy agencies including U.S. territories, Native American tribes and EPA.

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