



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review to evaluate how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensures that Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) primacy states—those states and territories granted primary responsibility for enforcement and implementation of SDWA—monitor and report drinking water sampling results from public water systems (PWSs). We also sought to determine how the EPA can improve its oversight of state drinking water sampling programs.

SDWA and its regulations require PWSs to routinely monitor and report drinking water quality. If a system does not monitor the quality of its water, consumers and primacy agencies cannot know whether the water meets health-based standards.

This report addresses the following EPA goals or cross-agency strategies:

- *Protecting America's waters.*
- *Launching a new era of state, tribal, local, and international partnerships.*

Send all inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or visit www.epa.gov/oig.

Listing of [OIG reports](#).

EPA Is Taking Steps to Improve State Drinking Water Program Reviews and Public Water Systems Compliance Data

What We Found

The EPA primarily uses two oversight tools to determine whether PWSs are monitoring and reporting drinking water quality in accordance with SDWA:

- Program reviews of state drinking water programs, which may specifically include the assessment of monitoring and reporting issues.
- Compliance data updated by primacy states in the federal version of the Safe Drinking Water Information System.

We identified limitations to both tools. The program reviews did not exhibit the level of comprehensiveness and region-to-region consistency shown in previous data verifications. Also, there is the risk that states did not provide reliable information to the EPA data system on monitoring and reporting violations.

The EPA is currently taking action to address these limitations. Therefore, we make no recommendations. The agency confirmed the factual accuracy of our report and stated that the EPA remains committed to providing tools to enhance the nation's drinking water program. This report is closed upon issuance.

The EPA is taking action to improve oversight tools used to determine whether public water systems are monitoring and reporting drinking water quality in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.