Driving In Winter Weather
By: Jeremy C. Wolfe,
Loss Control Manager
WV Bd. Of Risk and
Insurance Management

The days are getting shorter. Leaves have fallen from the trees. All are signs that Old Man Winter has arrived. For motorists, the change of season conjures up thoughts of bone-chilling, subzero temperatures and long, uncomfortable waits while their car warms up. Winter is the most difficult driving season. Not only do you have snow and ice to deal with, but there are fewer hours of daylight as well. Winter driving can be inconvenient, annoying, even infuriating, but there are measures you can take as a driver to offset these aggravations.

Winter weather poses significant driving challenges, but there are many things we can do to keep Old Man Winter at bay. Since weather conditions can be unpredictable, it is important to be well-prepared for winter driving. Get your vehicle winter-ready with a maintenance check-up. Don’t wait to have your tires, battery, belts, hoses, radiator, oil, lights, brakes, exhaust system, heater/defroster, wipers and ignition system checked.

While it is best to avoid driving in winter weather conditions, if you must venture out on the roads, you should keep in mind the three key elements of
Safe winter driving: Stay alert, slow down and stay in control. Drive according to road and weather conditions. Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you to avoid situations where you may have to brake suddenly on a slippery surface. A small patch of black ice, a brief white-out, a moment of inattention and you can find yourself stuck or off the road and waiting for assistance. As with everything else in life, preparation makes all the difference. Here’s what you will want to have on hand, especially in an emergency:

- Snow shovel;
- Scraper with a brush on one end;
- Tow chain or strap;
- Tire chains;
- Flashlight (with extra batteries);
- Abrasive material (cat litter, sand, salt or traction mats);
- Jumper cables;
- Warning device (flares or reflective triangles);
- Brightly colored cloth to signal for help;
- Empty coffee or similar type can containing candles, matches (in a water tight container) or a lighter, high-energy food (chocolate or dried fruit, for example);
- Sleeping bags or blankets, ski caps, and mittens;
- First-aid supplies

Winter weather conditions can come quickly, making previously clear roads hard to navigate even for seasoned drivers. By being prepared, you will be better suited to take on Old Man Winter and arrive safely at your destination.

References:
The National Safety Council
www.nsc.org

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
www.nhtsa.dot.gov

MSN Autos
http://editorial.autos.msn.com

Contributed by: Jill Farrar, Safety/Loss Control Specialist, WV BRIM
What is the Green Project Reserve?
In accordance with federal law, to the extent there are sufficient eligible project applications, not less than 20% of the funds in the FY2011 capitalization grant (Federal funds from EPA granted to DEP in support of the Clean Water Act) shall be used to address green infrastructure projects. A loan subsidization amount not to exceed $4,603,800 will be reserved for green technology type projects until the 20% requirement is met.

What type of Projects Qualify?
Allowable green project categories will be as follows:

1. **Energy Efficiency**

   A community may use improved technologies and practices to reduce the energy consumption of existing wastewater treatment systems, use energy in a more efficient way, and/or produce/utilize renewable energy. Only the dollar amount associated with the green component of a larger project will qualify for the green reserve. Proposed green projects in this category will be eligible to receive additional loan subsidization, in the form of debt forgiveness, to the lesser of 20% of the total eligible green CWSRF costs or $500,000.

Projects that will not be allowable include but are not limited to:

   a. Infiltration and inflow pipe repair or replacement
   b. Purchase of hybrid/alternative fuel vehicles for sewer fleets
   c. Operation, maintenance and replacement activities
   d. Drinking water related projects
2. Water Efficiency

Water efficiency type projects will not be allowable for additional loan subsidization or green technology funding, except for water reuse type projects. Proposed green projects in the water reuse category will be eligible to receive additional loan subsidization, in the form of debt forgiveness, to the lesser of 20% of the total eligible green CWSRF costs or $500,000.

3. Storm Water / Green Infrastructure

Allowable green projects to be funded under this category are:

   a. Publicly sponsored projects that utilize green technologies to treat or eliminate storm water from existing wastewater collection and treatment systems
   b. MS4 sponsored projects that utilize green technologies to solve storm water issues

Proposed green projects in this category will be eligible to receive additional loan subsidization, in the form of debt forgiveness, to the lesser of 20% of the total eligible green CWSRF costs or $500,000.

4. Environmentally Innovative

Allowable green projects to be funded in this category are:

   Decentralized sewer systems
      a. Publicly Owned Systems
      b. Privately Owned Onsite Systems

For constructing, upgrading, or repairing onsite/septic systems to existing eligible structures to protect water quality. The project must be sponsored by a local entity eligible to receive SRF funding.

A decentralized system is a wastewater treatment system reusing and/or dispersing the reclaimed water as close to its generation point as practical in each circumstance. A decentralized system may include: on-site systems contained entirely within the simple boundaries of the lot it serves; small-scale collective systems
within the simple boundaries of the lot it serves; small-scale collective systems, with their reuse/dispersal sites on easements on the lots served, on vacant lots purchased for this purpose, on off-site properties, or a combination of these; larger scale collective systems utilizing dispersed or aggregated reuse/dispersal sites or discharging to surface water. Any or all of these may be employed within the service area of a single responsible management entity (RME) to compose a unified wastewater management system. Management of the system must be planned to assure appropriate levels of oversight to each of the system components, as applicable to each situation. The RME shall have sufficient resources, be held legally responsible for the management of the system and be publically regulated as any other public service utility.

When designing a treatment system under the decentralized concept, a thorough analysis of all alternatives shall be performed to ensure that the proposed design is cost-effective and only allows for limited growth. The concept does not foster the sprawl that is typically associated with conventional strategies. Also, the concept prefers beneficial reuse of treated effluent or, at least sub-surface dispersal of effluent. Surface discharge of effluent should only be utilized as a last resort when other options are not feasible.

Proposed green projects in this category will be eligible to receive loan subsidization, in the form of debt forgiveness, of 100% of the total eligible green CWSRF costs.

During FY 2012, the CWSRF program will be piloting a design program for categorically green decentralized sewer system projects only. The program will fund the design of these systems from the available green debt forgiveness funds. Only the engineering fees required for the design will be eligible. In order to qualify for these funds, the project sponsor must assure the CWSRF program that the project will proceed to construction within 12 to 18 months of receiving the funds.

Where can I get more information?

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Telephone: (304) 926-0499 Ext. 1611
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Jefferson.E.Brady@wv.gov
Staff of the Public Service Commission (Commission) recently took a field trip and visited the West Virginia American Water’s (Company) Bluestone Treatment Facility located in Fayette County. During this trip we were provided a tour of the facility and also learned about a recent project of the Company called the Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project. This project is serving nearly 12,000 customers in the Fayette County area via funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Bureau for Public Health’s Drinking Water Treatment Revolving Fund, as well as a contribution from the Company since the project was determined to be a “green” project.

The AMI system transmits water consumption data collected at customer meters to the Company’s computer network daily via radio frequency. This system allows the Company to take a more proactive rather than reactive approach to customer high bill. Employees can then evaluate the data, not only for billing purposes, but also to uncover irregularities in water consumption (water leaks) so customers can be promptly notified. The system also has the capability of detecting leaks along the utility’s water mains through the use of acoustic monitors that are attached to valves to “listen” for leaks. The monitors are activated automatically at night when there are fewer other noises to detract from the leak sounds.

This system is much more efficient than the previous one, where personnel were equipped with mobile listening devices and moved from area to area listening for leaks. The AMI new system also provides a leak survey of the entire system every night and should help the Company to identify and prioritize leaks in their system.

Over time, the project is expected to significantly decrease the amount of lost and wasted water in the Fayette District. Other potential savings noted by the Company include a reduction in the amount of chlorine and other chemicals needed in the water treatment process, a reduction in the amount of waste residuals created.
during the process, a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, a reduction in vehicle expenses, and savings in electricity associated with a reduction in lost water.

Staff enjoyed the opportunity to tour the facility and learn about the AMI project. Should you have any questions regarding the AMI project please contact Brett Morgan, P.E., and Senior Planning Engineer with the Company, at (304) 340-2011 for additional information.


By: Pina Sangani,
Utilities Analyst
Public Service Commission
Water & Wastewater Division

They say:
“Seasons come and go; Sceneries change over time; Nothing stays the same”.

This means we have to change as the times change. The Commission adopted the 1996 Uniform System of Accounts (1996 USOA) which govern the requirements for water and sewer utilities in their financial records and Annual Report filings.

On March 9, 2011, through General Orders 188.28 and 186.22, the Public Service Commission promulgated final rule amendments to the rules for the Government of Water Utilities, 150.C.S.R.7 (Water Rules) and the rules for the Government of Sewer Utilities, 150 C.S.R.5 (Sewer Rules). These revised Rules were effective May 8, 2011.

The new Water Rules and Sewer Rules require utilities to file an Annual Report electronically with the Commission by using the 1996 USOA that was promulgated by the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners (NARUC) for Class A, B, and C water and sewer utilities. These rules require Water utilities to update their USOA from the 1976 version to the 1996 version and Sewer utilities to update their USOA from the 1958 version to the 1996 version. These modified classifications and revenue levels will not take effect until the first full fiscal year after the adoption of these rules. Thus, the Annual Reports being filed for the Fis-
cal Years Ending June 30, 2011, or December 31, 2011, will still be under the previous USOA. However, systems should now be maintaining or preparing to maintain their records for the 1996 USOA based upon when their respective fiscal years begin.

**Water/Sewer Rule 2.4:** states that every water and sewer utility is still required to file an annual financial and statistical report with the Commission on or before three months following the end of its fiscal year, in the form prescribed by the Commission. It also states that “In addition to the form requirement specified in the annual letter sent by the Commission to utilities, for all reports due to be filed after July 1, 2011, an electronic copy of the report shall be filed utilizing the form template and filling instructions that can be found on the Commission web site”. It means that all annual reports due to be filed after July 1, 2011, must be filed electronically unless approved by the Commission. The current Annual Report Templates can be requested online at [http://www.psc.state.wv.us/Efile/Annual Reports/default.htm](http://www.psc.state.wv.us/Efile/Annual Reports/default.htm).

**Water/Sewer Rule 2.5:** states that utilities are required to maintain their accounts and records for the full Fiscal Year Ending 2011 by using the 1976 USOA promulgated by the NARUC for the Water utilities and by using the 1958 USOA promulgated by the NARUC for the Sewer utilities. However, they will have to update their account numbering systems to the USOA charts that were promulgated by the NARUC in 1996, for Class A, B, and C water and sewer utilities for 2012 and on Annual Report filing.

The copies of the 1996 USOA charts can be purchased from NARUC’s website at [http://www.naruc.org/Store/](http://www.naruc.org/Store/). There are many changes that have been proposed by NARUC concerning the USAO for Class A, B & C for water and sewer utilities. The summary of proposed changes is attached with the purchase of the 1996 USOA charts. We have summarized a few of the changes for you below, however, it is your utility’s responsibility to fully review the 1996 USOA for additional information. A few of the changes include:

1. The new 1996-USOA has increased the Class A, B & C revenues levels. The new levels for water and sewer utilities are:

   **Class A:** Annual revenues of $1,000,000 or more
Class B: Annual Revenues of $ 200,000 -$999,999

Class C: Annual Revenues of less than $ 200,000

2. Another major change is capitalizing versus expensing. The new capitalization levels for water and sewer utilities are:

   Class A: Allows $750 for Capitalization

   Class B: Allows $400 for Capitalization

   Class C: Allows $150 for Capitalization.

3. The 1996 USOA has also divided multiple accounts into sub-accounts for the functional areas of source of supply, collection, transmission and distribution, treatment, customer accounts, and administrative and general accounts. Examples of accounts being subdivided include: employees salaries, rental expenses, salaries of board members, power cost, and Contractual Services.

For the Year Ending 2012 Annual Report Templates, the Commission will continue with the same format as the previous year of 2011. The Class A and B Reports will be combined into one template while Class C will have a separate template for the water and sewer utilities.

The Water and Wastewater Division’s Staff has prepared translation tables that compare the USOA from 1976 to 1996 for the Water Utilities and from 1958 to 1996 for the Sewer Utilities. The PSC guideline is an informal interpretation of the comparison of prior USOA to the 1996 USOA. There could be variants from our guide since a utility’s current account set up may include different account interpretations. We recommend you carefully review the 1996 USOA and discuss changes with your utility’s accountant to reduce misunderstandings during this transition period.

Contact Pina Sangani at Psangani@psc.state.wv.us or call (304)-340-0769 for the further assistance.
The Public Service Commission (PSC) partners with other state agencies to conduct free seminars designed to assist in the education and training of utility personnel and board members regarding water and wastewater issues. Each seminar has a unique agenda, with some seminars offering a broad overview, while others focus on specific topics.

Included in this article is a list of the seminars scheduled for 2012 as well as a brief description on each seminar. You may register for these classes in the next several months by going to the following PSC website:

http://www.psc.state.wv.us/scripts/ww_seminar_reg/SeminarList.cfm

Some changes for seminar attendance scheduling include:

1. **Registration for seminars will close 14 calendar days in advance of the first day of each seminar.** If there is not sufficient participation (at least 10 participants registered) by that time, the seminar will be cancelled. Participants will be notified of any cancellations.

2. Participant cancellations for seminars must be received in writing no later than three days prior to the first day of the seminar. No verbal cancellations will be accepted. **Utilities will be billed at the rate of $100.00 for each participant who does not cancel according to these guidelines.**

Should you encounter issues with registering, please contact Nancy Tincher at 1-800-344-5113, ext. 440, for additional assistance. Some seminars have limited seating, so if you are interested, please make your reservations early. Below is a brief description of the 2012 seminars being offered.
**PSD Board Member Seminar:** Mandatory training for new Public Service District board members is required by West Virginia Code 16-13A-3. This seminar also serves as a refresher course for existing board members, and is open to other utility personnel who would like to attend. Please be aware that other utility personnel can attend, provided, there is sufficient seating remaining after new board members have been registered. The PSC, Bureau for Public Health, and the Department of Environmental Protection, along with other guest speakers, cover a broad spectrum of issues affecting utility operations. Sessions may include discussions on financial management, funding options, asset management, ethics, open-meetings information, risk management, state code, and rules and regulations.

**Managing Employees to Avoid Legal Conflict:** This seminar is geared towards Board Members, Council Members, and Managers. Some of the topics for discussion include employee issues (civil rights, discharge, discipline, performance evaluations, training), the hiring process, unemployment compensation, wage and hour issues, workers compensation, workplace policies and handbooks, and where to go for assistance.

**Utility Office Works:** This seminar is geared towards utility office employees and managers. Some of the topics for discussion include the Water and Sewer Rules, applications for service, security deposits, billing information (prorating bills, estimated bills, leak adjustments), discontinuing service (customer notification, termination timelines, deferred payment plans), liens, stress management and customer relations.

**Safety Seminar (Excavation and Trenching):** This seminar is geared toward field personnel, operators, and managers. Discussion items include proper techniques, trenching and shoring regulations, etc.

**Rule 42 Seminar:** This is a new seminar for 2012 and is geared towards utility managers, certified public accounts, and others involved in the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC) filings and PSC filings. Discussion areas include an overview of the IJDC process, requirements for Rule 42s submitted with IJDC applications, and discussions on Rule 42 requirements associated with Certificates of Convenience and Necessity as well as for general rate increases.
**Safety Seminar (OSHA 10 hr.):** This seminar is geared towards field personnel, operators, and managers. Topics for discussion include record keeping, identifying surface hazards, emergency action plans, personal protective equipment, how to handle hazardous chemicals, managing workplace safety, etc.

**Managers Seminar:** This seminar is geared towards utility managers. Some of the topics for discussion include leadership and utility management (short and long term planning, problem solving, staffing), communications, emergency operations, conducting meetings, financial management (budgeting, cash flow analysis, bond requirements, internal controls), and a case study.

**Basic Accounting Seminar:** This seminar is geared towards office staff and managers. Topics for discussion include office basics (setting up new customer accounts, receiving payments, leak adjustments, prorating bills, preparing bank deposits, reconcile bank statement, time sheets), budget preparation, inventory, and basic internal control discussions.

The following table outlines the 2012 seminar schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 Seminar Classes</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSD Bd. Members</td>
<td>February 23-25, 2012</td>
<td>South Charleston</td>
<td>Charleston Conference Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Employees to Avoid Legal Conflict</td>
<td>March 29, 2012</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>PSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Office Works</td>
<td>May 15-16, 2012</td>
<td>Beckley</td>
<td>Tamarack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Seminar (Excavation and Trenching)</td>
<td>June 6-7, 2012</td>
<td>Morgantown</td>
<td>Morgantown Utility Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 42 Seminar</td>
<td>June 26, 2012</td>
<td>Morgantown</td>
<td>Morgantown Utility Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For 2012, the Water and Wastewater Division will also conduct regional assistance meetings throughout the state to provide water and sewer utilities with an opportunity to meet with us in a question and answer meeting format. Scheduling for these meetings will be based on utility feedback. If you are interested in participating in a regional meeting or have questions on the 2012 Seminar Schedule please contact Dave Acord at 304-340-0366 or dacord@psc.state.wv.us for additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule 42 Seminar</td>
<td>July 10, 2012</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>PSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSD Bd. Members</td>
<td>August 16-18, 2012</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Wingate Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Seminar (OSHA 10 Hr.)</td>
<td>September 25-26, 2012</td>
<td>Morgantown</td>
<td>Morgantown Utility Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangers Seminar</td>
<td>October 10-11, 2012</td>
<td>Beckley</td>
<td>Tamarack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Accounting Seminar</td>
<td>November 13, 2012</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>PSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Water Accounted For?

By: Sylvie Steranka,
Technical Analyst
Engineering Division
Public Service Commission

Every day in the United States, treated water losses amount to about 7 billion gallons. It is important to address these inefficiencies, thus preserving water supplies for future generations, saving money, and protecting the environment. The Public Service Commission of West Virginia requests water utilities to report annually on
the amount of unaccounted for water losses according to the following:

Rule 1.7.q of the Commission’s Rules and Regulations for the Government of Water Utilities (150 C.S.R. 7) defines “unaccounted for water” as “The volume of water introduced into the distribution system less all metered usage and all known non-metered usage which can be estimated with reasonable accuracy.”

Rule 5.6 of the Commission’s Water Rules also stipulates that “Each utility shall determine either by actual measurement or by estimate the amount of "Unaccounted for Water" as defined in 1.7.q. of these Rules in each division of its system and report, separately, to the Commission in its annual report. Said report shall contain the proposed remedial actions to be taken if unaccounted for water is in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the gross production on an annual basis.”

In reporting, water utilities interpret and calculate or estimate the amount of unaccounted for water losses (UFWL) by comparing the volume of water sold to the volume of water pumped to the distribution system. Some utilities add the volume of water purchased to the amount of water pumped, others subtract from the amount of water sold the amount of water lost but accounted for such as water used for plant use, fire department use, flushing, or main leaks. The estimated reported amounts of water that are unbilled, but accounted for sometimes result in a low percentage of UFWL that may undermine the amount of real losses in the system. The UFWL is a financial indicator that is not adequate or detailed enough to describe, identify, and quantify water losses in a system, but simply a factor used in determining revenue requirements for a utility.

Engineering Staff recommends water utilities use a better system to understand and control their losses such as the method developed by the International Water Association (IWA) and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) detailed in the “Water Audits and Loss Control Programs, Manual of Water Supply Practices M36.

The AWWA / IWA method uses the principle of input = output. Water balances are performed at several levels to gain a better knowledge of the system and pinpoints areas that need to be taken care of. For instance, the total volume of treated water produced and/or bought is equal to the authorized consumption (volume of water metered and unmetered) plus the total volume of water losses. The methodology consists of performing an audit using well defined concepts and terms.
The following is the AWWA/IWA water balance table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Input Volume (corrected for known errors)</th>
<th>Authorized Consumption</th>
<th>Water Losses</th>
<th>Real Losses</th>
<th>Revenue Water</th>
<th>Non-Revenue Water (NRW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billed Authorized Consumption</td>
<td>Billed Metered Consumption (including water exported)</td>
<td>Unbilled Authorized Consumption</td>
<td>Apparent Losses</td>
<td>Unauthorized Consumption</td>
<td>Customer Metering Inaccuracies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billed Unmetered Consumption</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unbilled Unmetered Consumption</td>
<td>Real Losses</td>
<td>Leaking on Transmission and Distribution Mains</td>
<td>Systematic Data Handling Errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billed Metered Consumption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leakage and Overflows at Utility’s Storage Tanks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billed Unmetered Consumption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leakage on Service Connections up to point of Customer metering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table can be used to set up equations and gain knowledge of the system since the items contained in one column need to equal the items contained in another column to maintain a balance between input and output. The table can also be read in rows to establish definitions of terms and concepts.

For example:

- System Input Volume = Authorized Consumption + Water Losses
- System Input Volume = Revenue Water + Non-Revenue Water
- Water losses = Apparent Losses + Real Losses
- Real Losses = Leakage on Mains + Leakage and Overflows of Storage Tanks + Leakage on Service Connections
- Non-Revenue Water = Unbilled Authorized Consumption + Apparent Losses + Real Losses

From the results of the audit, several performance indicators that are useful in assessing the performance of the utility can be computed.
The AWWA provides a free audit software that can be downloaded from its website:  [http://www.awwa.org/files/science/WaterLoss/WaterAuditTermsOfUse.pdf](http://www.awwa.org/files/science/WaterLoss/WaterAuditTermsOfUse.pdf)

It allows the utility to calculate several operational and financial performance indicators such as: the non-revenue water by volume, the non-revenue water by cost, the apparent losses, the real losses. The Current Annual Volume of Real Losses (CARL); the Unavoidable Annual Real Losses (UARL); and the Infrastructure Leak Index (ILI).

\[
\text{CARL (gallons/day)} = \text{Transmission Losses} + \text{Distribution Losses} + \text{Storage Losses} + \text{Service Line Losses}
\]

\[
\text{UARL (gallons/day)} = (5.41 \times L_m + 0.15 \times N_c + 7.5 \times L_p) \times P
\]

With \(L_m\) = Length of transmission and distribution system (miles)
\(N_c\) = Number of service connections
\(L_p\) = Total length of private pipe (miles)
\(P\) = Average pressure in the zone studied (psi)

\[
\text{ILI} = \frac{\text{CARL}}{\text{UARL}}
\]

The ILI is a great indicator for benchmarking utilities with more than 3,000 service connections.

Engineering Staff has reviewed the methodology described above and believes that it offers a precise and systematic way for water utilities to control their resources from the time water is pumped into the distribution system to the time it reaches the customers.

By implementing such a control program, utilities can begin to be able to have a better understanding of their losses. Decisions can be made to reduce the water that was previously “lost”, such as reported as UFWL, thus increasing revenue, reducing needs for other sources, or deferring development of new sources.
Administrating unused medications is an environmental and as well as a safety concern. It use to be, we were told to flush unwanted medications down the drain or toilet. Although effective in removing the medication from potentially being misused, flushing creates a new and growing problem in the environment. Antibiotics and other medications in a septic system can retard and/or kill beneficial bacteria necessary for the system to operate. Wastewater treatment plants are generally not designed to remove or process many compounds found in medications that end up being discharged into our surface and ground water. A study by the United States Geological Survey done in 1999 showed that in 80% of the streams sampled contained detectable levels of compounds found in common medications.

What should citizens do with unwanted medications? First, check with your pharmacy to see if they have a drug take back program or participates with programs like the West Virginia Consumer Drug Take Back Program. Second, find out if there is a special collection for unused and expired drugs in your area by contacting your local household hazardous waste collection, recycling coordinator or contacting the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA): National Take Back Initiative. Controlled substances can only be accepted under special collection arrangements due to federal regulations.

Additional disposal information about prescription drug use and disposal issues can be found at:

• EPA Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products as Pollutants:  www.epa.gov/ppcp

TAPPER SAYS:

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA

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