



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

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### **U.S. EPA orders two Arizona water companies to monitor drinking water for disinfection byproducts**

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**SAN FRANCISCO** – Under the terms of an order by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the South Mountain Water Company and the Signal Peak Water Company must correct recent violations of the nation's Safe Drinking Water Act.

According to the EPA, South Mountain Water Company and the Signal Peak Water Company each failed to submit a plan detailing how it will monitor and sample for disinfection byproducts that could be produced when chlorine, ozone, or chlorine dioxide is used to disinfect the water. If either water company fails to comply with the order, it could face fines of up to \$32,500 per day.

"Because of their role as water providers for children and families, agencies that provide drinking water must take steps to comply with all federal regulations," said Alexis Strauss, Water Division director for the EPA's Pacific Southwest region. "We are confident that both South Mountain Water Company and Signal Peak Water Company will comply."

South Mountain Water Company provides drinking water for approximately 220 customers in Casa Grande, Pinal County, Ariz., and Signal Peak Water Company serves 80 people in the same area. The two systems were required to submit their monitoring plans by April 1, 2007.

Disinfection is a chemical process in which chlorine, ozone or chlorine dioxide is added to drinking water to kill disease causing pathogens. The EPA regulates the concentrations of disinfection byproducts such as trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, bromate and chlorite, which can be produced when disinfectants are used in water treatment and react with natural organic matter.

After many years of consumption, these chemicals may cause liver, kidney or central nervous system problems and may increase the risk of cancer.

The EPA established new disinfection byproduct regulations in December 1998 to protect public health from potentially harmful byproduct chemicals that form when chlorine reacts with natural organic compounds during the treatment process. The Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproduct Rule began regulating surface water systems serving 10,000 or more customers in January 2002. Phased implementation of smaller surface systems, as well as, groundwater systems began in January 2004.

For more information on the EPA and water pollutants, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/watewaterpollutants.html>

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