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# U.S. EPA reminds utilities of looming arsenic deadline Smaller water providers in Central Calif., Nev., Ariz., most affected in West

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For Immediate Release: July 6, 2005  
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**SAN FRANCISCO** – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reminding water systems that a new, more protective national standard for arsenic in drinking water will take effect less than six months from now.

The U.S. EPA adopted the new standard in 2001 that requires all drinking water systems to reduce arsenic from the current standard of 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion. The main areas affected in the western United States include small water utilities that draw their drinking water from deep underground wells in California's foothills and Central Valley, and throughout Arizona and Nevada. The EPA estimates that nationwide, roughly 97 percent of the utilities that fail to meet the new standard are the smaller systems, which serve fewer than 10,000 people.

"We will continue working with our states and drinking water systems to find cost-effective ways to meet the new arsenic drinking water standard," said Alexis Strauss, director of the water division for the EPA's Pacific Southwest Office in San Francisco. "This new standard will protect the health of over 13 million Americans, including many smaller communities in California, Arizona, Nevada and on tribal lands."

The EPA estimates that the new standard will provide greater protection from cancer risks and other health problems. Ingesting too much arsenic can lead to lung, bladder, liver, skin and other cancers, as well as damage to the cardiovascular, pulmonary, immune, neurological and endocrine systems.

The EPA, state and local agencies are providing information and technical assistance to utilities that have yet to install treatment systems or take alternative approaches to reduce arsenic levels. Some of the treatment methods used to reduce arsenic levels include iron precipitation and filtration, ion exchange and adsorption to iron media.

For more information, contact your local office of your state drinking water agency or go to EPA's website:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic.html>.

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