



WATER RINGS

Safe as Tap Water?

For years, the bottled water industry has distanced itself from tap water by making bold claims about the superior quality of their product. As consumers grow increasingly convinced that bottled water is a better alternative to tap water, it has been the fastest growing commodity in the beverage industry. But now the boom is in danger of fading as regulators are asked to set and enforce stricter rules on bottled water and bring it in line with public water supply regulations.

Following a four-year study, the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) has formally petitioned the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for stricter regulation of bottled water. The recommendations, supported by public water suppliers and the American Water Works Association (AWWA), include setting stricter limits for contaminants, applying FDA rules to all bottled water and adopting rules for bottled water testing.

Unlike public water suppliers who are regulated by both federal and state guidelines, bottled water has little or no requirements. New regulations could create major changes to an industry in which perceived quality is the most important ingredient.

In its study, the NRDC tested thousands of samples of 103 brands of bottled water purchased nationally. The results proved the bottled water safe, but found that overall, federal standards for contaminants are much lower or non-existent for bottled water than for public tap water.

Nearly 70 percent of the bottled water sold in the United States is exempt from any FDA contamination limits and specific bottled water standards because it is bottled and sold in the same state.

Price, appearance and advertising have all contributed to bottled water's success and perceived value. However this does not assure the quality of the product inside. Most customers subconsciously accept the old axiom, "you get what you pay for" and are willing to pay for quality that is implied, not guaranteed. During the past decade national bottled water revenues have tripled to about \$4 billion per year. Americans drank an estimated 3.6 billion gallons of the product in 1998 and sales have been increasing 10 percent annually.

Unlike the bottled water industry, the North Wales Water Authority is a licensed purveyor of public drinking water. We are regulated by the Federal and Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water Acts which requires routine monitoring and reporting of over 80 drinking water contaminants. We are also required to provide these results in an annual water quality report to every consumer that we serve.

As a stakeholder of the community, the Authority feels strongly that bottled water should meet the same stringent standards as the tap water that we supply to our customers. People should be protected whether they are drinking bottled water or tap water.

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question: *What do the blue lines on my property represent?*

Answer: We receive many calls at our office asking why we are painting blue lines on properties and on streets. Although aesthetically it may not appear very nice, it represents a very important aspect of our business and ultimately, your safety.

These blue lines provide temporary markings of subsurface facilities, i.e. water lines, to prevent accidental damage or service interruption by contractors, utility companies or homeowners who are working on or near those underground facilities.

The North Wales Water Authority is a member of the PA One Call System, which was inceptioned in 1972. As a member of this group, our inspection department receives notices daily from our PA One Call computer. The notice includes the address and reason for request. The law states that we must respond to each notice within a specified period of time. It is then our responsibility to mark off our water lines. If we do not respond to a notice and another contractor hits our water line, we are held responsible.

We receive, on average, 200 PA One Calls per week.

Thank you for your understanding on why it is necessary to make these markings. It is for the safety of our customers.

ANOTHER YEAR GOES BY WITHOUT A RATE INCREASE

Every year we put our best effort forward to hold our rate structure. For the fiscal year, November 1, 1999 through October 31, 2000, the North Wales Water Authority is proud to announce that we will not have a rate increase. This will be our sixth consecutive year without a rate increase.

We are continually looking for ways to run our business more efficiently and effectively. By doing this, we have been able to make considerable changes that have allotted us the opportunity to hold our rate structure yet another year.

AUTOFLOW - SIGN UP NOW AND RECEIVE 1,000 GALLONS OF WATER FREE

AutoFlow, our automatic payment withdrawal program, is a great way to pay your water utility bills automatically. During the 1st quarter of 2000, we will be offering you 1,000 gallons of water absolutely **FREE** if you sign-up for this program.

It will not only be a great convenience to you, but it will save you money by eliminating the need for postage.

The process is simple. You will still receive a statement before the money is withdrawn from your account. If you have a discrepancy on the statement, simply call our office to get it cleared up before the amount is withdrawn. You will have a period of ten days to contact us.

To sign-up for AutoFlow, simply go to our website, www.nwwater.com, click on "Value-Added Services" and choose AutoFlow - Sign-up. Print out the application, complete the requested information, attach a voided check and mail it to our office. It only takes a few days for the application to be processed. Or, if you do not have internet access, please call our office at 215-699-4836 and we will gladly forward an application to you.

If you have any questions on this program or any of our other programs, please do not hesitate to call our customer service department at 215-699-4836.

HURRY...THIS OFFER EXPIRES 4/15/00!

*Offer valid with new applications only.

WATER RINGS IS PUBLISHED
QUARTERLY TO SERVE OUR
CUSTOMERS IN:

NORTH WALES BOROUGH AND LOWER GWYNEDD, MONTGOMERY, NEW
BRITAIN, UPPER DUBLIN, AND UPPER GWYNEDD, AND WHITPAIN
TOWNSHIPS.