

Drinking Water Branch Seeing Big Changes to Your MRO! Modernization and Automation

By Lucio M. Ternieden, Chief, Field Inspection Section

As you may have noticed, IDEM's Drinking Water Branch has been going through some changes lately. Our Governor has tasked Agencies in the State of Indiana with continual improvements as to better serve the citizens of Indiana. The Drinking Water Branch has made several electronic improvements to the Compliance, Permit, Capacity & Certification and Field Sections in the past couple of years. We are currently undertaking a transition to better process permits, reports, and requests. The process will provide additional internal benefits to further improve permits and reports issuance. The Compliance Section, in 2020, rolled out the Compliance Monitoring Data Portal (CMDP). An electronic laboratory reporting process where laboratories are now required to directly submit sample results to IDEM. This allows drinking water compliance results to be viewable in the Drinking Water Watch website instantaneously. The Field Inspection Section has too gone through some changes in our report writing, review and delivery. With the Safe Water Information Field Tool (SWIFT), we have gone completely paperless and continue to meet our Commissioner's directive of providing you an inspection report well within seven days of the site visit. We are now providing the inspection reports directly to your email inbox! This change cuts down on clerical hours in processing, office supplies, paper and greatly reduces the time that it takes to get it to you.

One more important change that the Drinking Water Branch will be making in 2021 is the processing of Monthly Reports of Operation (MRO). We have long been receiving paper MROs through the mail or the fax and even dropped off at the office. As of recent years, more and more of you have been submitting them by email, which is now our preferred method. A study we conducted reviewed that dozens of hours per month are spent on MROs. With the assistance of our Information Technology department, we are undertaking a project to greatly reduce the time spent processing the MROs and hope to make it more automated.

For this improvement we will need your help! First, we ask that you email your MROs to IDEM other than through the fax machine. Faxing is unreliable, because we do not get reports when the fax machine is not working or there is a problem with the transmission. If you have already kicked the fax to the curb, thank you! Second, please review your MRO form date to be sure you have the most up to date form. You may download a fillable copy at our [Forms website](#) and search using form number 34609. Third, we need for everyone to start electronically mailing their reports to DWBMRO@idem.in.gov. This is the most reliable and assured way to send in your report. You will receive a confirmation email that we have received it and your MRO will be quickly available for viewing at our [Virtual File Cabinet](#).

The last thing to consider and may be the most important when emailing your MROs to IDEM. Your email MRO attachment must be a PDF file and will need to follow a specific naming protocol. For this, we would like for you to name the MRO file in the following way: **PWSID#_01_YYYYMM** - Where your Public Water System Identification Number is followed by the underscore then your Entry Point number is followed by an underscore, then the four-digit year and two-digit month. It will look like this as an example: **5208006_01_202107**, for the July 2021 MRO report. If you have multiple entry points under the same PWSID#, MROs will now need to be submitted as separate PDF files, each with their individual Entry Point number (_01_ or 02 or 03, etc.). No additional characters are allowed. MRO reports are still due by the 10th of the month following the monitoring period.

Please be aware that MROs are considered public documents. Do not include any sensitive information in them such as well location/addresses, flow schematics/plant drawings, or any other potentially sensitive information. Only include what is required by 327 IAC 8-11-1. Sample results, chlorine residual data beyond what is in the MRO and other data used at the plant or bench sheets should not be submitted with the MRO. You may want to keep them in your own filing system.

We plan on starting July 1, 2021; however, we understand that this process change will take some time. We will help you through this process and let you know how it is working. We thank you for your understanding, patience, and cooperation as we continue to improve our systems and hope that you too will find this process easy and helpful. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 317/234-7461 or at LTernied@idem.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Lucio M. Ternieden, Chief, Field Inspection Section, Drinking Water Branch, IDEM.