

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY****40 CFR Parts 141 and 143**

[WH-FRL-6132-1]

RIN 2040-AC77

**National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: Analytical Methods for Regulated Drinking Water Contaminants****AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency.**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** Today, EPA is proposing to approve the use of updated versions of previously approved American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater (Standard Methods or SM) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) analytical methods for compliance determinations of chemical and microbiological contaminants in drinking water. At the same time, the Agency is withdrawing approval of the previous versions of the 14 EPA methods. Previous versions of the SM and ASTM methods will continue to be approved. In addition the Agency is making minor technical corrections or amendments in the inorganic, organic and total trihalomethane sampling and analytical requirements section in the Code of Federal Regulation. Elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**, the Agency is promulgating this rule as a direct final rule because the Agency does not expect adverse comments and wants to allow immediate use of the methods for compliance monitoring. The Agency believes that it is in the public interest to make these methods available quickly by approving them via direct final rulemaking since the revised versions contain noncontroversial changes or optional improvements. EPA invites comment on the substance of the direct final rule (addressing the updated versions of previously approved ASTM, SM, and EPA analytical methods) in the "final rules" section of today's **Federal Register**.

When EPA issues a direct final rule making it also issues a companion proposed rule. The effective date on the final rule is set sufficiently in the future to allow for the receipt of and response to public comments before the direct final rule goes into effect. If EPA receives relevant adverse comments, then EPA will publish a timely withdrawal informing the public that the final rule will not take effect. EPA has chosen to use the direct final

approach for these regulatory actions because the Agency does not expect to receive relevant adverse public comments. Additionally, the procedure allows for the most expeditious implementation possible consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). If EPA decides to withdraw any or all of the actions, EPA will proceed with a revised rule based on the companion proposed rule.

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing by November 2, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be submitted either by mail or electronically. Comments may be sent by mail to the W-97-04 Drinking Water Analytical Methods Final Comment Clerk, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Water Docket, MC 4101, 401 M Street, SW Washington, D.C. 20460. Please submit any references cited in your comments. EPA would appreciate an original and 3 copies of your comments and enclosures (including references).

No facsimiles (faxes) will be accepted because EPA cannot ensure that they will be submitted to the Water Docket. To ensure that EPA can read, understand and therefore properly respond to comments, the Agency would prefer that commenters cite, where possible, the paragraph(s) in the proposed regulation (e.g., 141.23(k)) to which each comment refers. Commenters should use a separate paragraph for each method or issue discussed. Commenters who would like acknowledgment of receipt of their comments should include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. For information on submitting comments electronically see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

The record for this rulemaking has been established under docket number W-97-04. Copies of the public comments received, references cited in this notice and other supporting documents are available for review at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Water Docket, East Tower Basement, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20460. For access to the docket materials, call 202-260-3027 on Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time for an appointment.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jitendra Saxena, Ph.D., Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (MC-4607), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20460, telephone (202) 260-9579; or one of the EPA Regional Office contacts listed below. General information may

also be obtained from the EPA Drinking Water Hotline. Callers within the United States may reach the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791. The Safe Drinking Water Hotline is open Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

For technical information regarding microbiology methods, contact Paul S. Berger, Ph.D., Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (MC-4607), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. 20460, telephone, (202) 260-3039. For technical information regarding chemistry methods, contact Richard Reding, Ph.D., Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Cincinnati, Ohio 45268, telephone (513) 569-7961.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** See the information provided in the direct final action which is located in the rules section of this **Federal Register**.

**Electronic Comment Submission**

Electronic comments should be addressed to the Internet address: ow-docket@epamail.epa.gov. Electronic comments must be submitted as an ASCII file and avoid use of special characters and any form of encryption. Electronic comments must be identified by the docket number W-97-04. Comments and data will also be accepted on disks in WordPerfect in 5.1 format or ASCII file format. Electronic comments on this document may be filed online at many Federal Depository Libraries. Electronic comments will be transferred into a paper version for the official record. EPA will attempt to clarify electronic comments if there is an apparent error in transmission. Comments provided electronically will be considered timely if they are submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern time) on November 2, 1998.

**Information on Internet Access**

This **Federal Register** document is available on the Internet for public review and downloading at the following location: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr>.

**List of Subjects****40 CFR Part 141**

Environmental protection, Analytical methods, Chemicals, Incorporation by reference, Indians—lands, Intergovernmental relations, Radiation protection, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Water supply.

**40 CFR Part 143**

Environmental protection, Analytical methods, Chemicals, Incorporation by

reference, Indians—lands, Water  
supply.

Dated: July 23, 1998.

**Carol M. Browner,**

*Administrator.*

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