



June 12, 2026

STEPHEN KRUEGER
RICHLAND CENTER WATERWORKS 15300681
450 SOUTH MAIN
PO BOX 312
RICHLAND CENTER, WI 535810312

SUBJECT: Nitrification Investigation at Municipal Community Water Systems

Dear Water System Owner/Sampler:

Ammonia is an inorganic chemical compound that can be present in source water throughout Wisconsin. The presence of ammonia in source water can cause nitrification events within a municipal community water system's distribution system. Nitrification is a chemical process that can result when naturally occurring microorganisms consume and convert ammonia into nitrite and nitrate. As incidents like the one that occurred in the Village of Williams Bay in August of 2025 have shown, nitrification events can result in elevated nitrite and nitrate levels within a distribution system that pose serious public health risks to consumers.

Aside from nitrification events, elevated ammonia in a municipal community water system's source water can also impede a system's disinfection operations and contribute to corrosion control issues. This can lead to harmful bacteria occurring at the tap as well as elevated lead and copper levels.

Ammonia can occur in source water for a variety of reasons, including agricultural fertilizer runoff, municipal sewage discharge, or natural organic decomposition. Ammonia can occur naturally in both surface and groundwater and may also be present in the environment due to anthropogenic activities. Issues with a system's infrastructure, such as deteriorating wells or wells that are not properly constructed, may also contribute to higher levels of ammonia in source water. Testing for ammonia is therefore the only way to know for sure whether ammonia is present in a system's source water, and at what concentrations.

As a result of the identified environmental and human health concerns for ammonia in source water, the Department of Natural Resources (department) is taking steps to investigate nitrification in municipal community water systems statewide. The department has identified your system, RICHLAND CENTER WATERWORKS, as a participant in the initiative to test your system's source water during the 4th quarter (October to December) of 2026.

The department is requiring your municipal community water system to test for ammonia in source water during the 4th Quarter of 2026 pursuant to s. NR 809.73, Wis. Adm. Code. This provision allows the department to order chemical testing for constituents in water that are not otherwise regulated under ch. NR 809, Wis. Adm. Code, *Safe Drinking Water*, if the department determines it is required to protect public health, safety, or welfare. The department provided public notice of this order by publication in the Wisconsin State Journal on June 16, 2026.

Drinking water systems must utilize a laboratory certified or registered by EPA or under ch. NR 149, Wis. Adm. Code, for analysis of ammonia (as N) in the aqueous matrix. The department will only accept use of the methods listed in ch. NR 219, Wis. Adm. Code, 40 CFR Part 136, or those methods that have an alternate test procedure approval from the EPA. Vendor methods without an alternate test procedure approval letter will not be acceptable. Methods must be able to achieve a Limit of Quantitation (LOQ) for ammonia of 0.2 mg/L or less. The department

will coordinate with you on or about September 16, 2026, to establish your system's specific ammonia source water testing schedule and to provide the lab slips for this initiative. The department strongly encourages you to communicate with your preferred certified laboratory to ensure that the laboratory will be able to meet these requirements.

The department will review all ammonia testing results in early 2027 and expects to follow up with any system where a source has ammonia concentrations of 0.2 milligrams per liter (mg/L) or greater. The department plans on providing these systems with information on ways to minimize risks associated with ammonia in their source water. The department may also require systems with high ammonia concentrations to conduct additional monitoring for nitrite and nitrate within their distribution system during the summer of 2027 when nitrification is more likely to occur and the public health risk is greatest.

If you believe you have the right to challenge the department's decision to proceed with this initiative, Wisconsin statutes and administrative rules establish time periods within which requests to review department decisions must be filed. To request a contested case hearing pursuant to s. NR 809.73(1), Wis. Adm. Code, and s. 227.42, Wis. Stats., you must serve a petition for hearing on the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources within 30 days after the date of this letter. The request for hearing must be in writing and follow the format provided in s. NR 2.05(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide safe drinking water to your customers and for your efforts to ensure the source water quality for your municipal system. Please contact LAUREN BELZ if you have questions regarding this source water ammonia testing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KB', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Kyle Burton
Field Operations Director – Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Phone: (920)-360-2112
Kyle.Burton@Wisconsin.Gov