***The Water Quality Association***

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**ABOUT STANDARDS THAT AFFECT THE MUNICIPAL MARKET**

**(Prepared for ASDWA’s Weekly Update)**

**October 26, 2012**

**What standards affect the municipal market?**

There are three main product testing standards that affect the municipal market.

1. NSF/ANSI 60: Drinking Water Treatment Chemicals – Health Effects
2. NSF/ANSI 61: Drinking Water System Components – Health Effects
3. NSF/ANSI 14: Plastic Piping System Components and Related Materials

**What products are certified under NSF/ANSI 60?**

Products certified under NSF/ANSI 60 are direct water additives such as chemicals used for a treatment effect. Typically these chemicals are used by municipalities or in well applications. Testing and certification to NSF/ANSI 60 confirms that the additives do not contain contaminants at levels that are harmful when used in drinking water. Some examples of direct water additives covered by NSF/ANSI 60 are coagulants, flocculants, sequestering agents, disinfectants, and pH adjustment chemicals.

**What products are certified under NSF/ANSI 61?**

Products certified under NSF/ANSI 61 are materials, parts, devices, or systems that contact drinking water, drinking water treatment chemicals, or both. Almost all products that contact drinking water (from source to tap) can be certified under this standard. The products are evaluated to determine if the materials they are made with will leach harmful contaminants or impurities into water. For instance, a brass valve may leach lead into water. Some examples of products covered by NSF/ANSI 61 are joining and sealing materials (caulk, thread sealant, gaskets); pipes and fittings; barrier materials (coatings, cements, diaphragms); mechanical devices (valves, pumps, chemical feeders); and mechanical plumbing devices (faucets, supply stops, bubblers).

**What products are certified under NSF/ANSI 14?**

Products certified under NSF/ANSI 14 are plastic piping systems and components used for transporting drinking water, sewer water, and gas. While NSF/ANSI 60 and NSF/ANSI 61 just evaluate health effects, NSF/ANSI 14 goes further by evaluating products against minimum physical, performance, and health effects requirements. NSF/ANSI 14 requires that plastic pipe and plastic pipe components used in potable water applications also comply with NSF/ANSI 61.

**What organizations provide certification to these standards?**

There are a handful of certification bodies that provide certification to these standards. When choosing a certifier or a certified product, it is important to make sure that the certification body is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI; United States) and/or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC; Canada). ANSI or SCC accreditation demonstrates that the certification body is running a reputable certification program that follows quality control guidelines from a nationally recognized guide. Certification bodies that are accredited undergo annual on-site facility assessments that span across multiple days. These inspections verify that the certification body is following strict guidelines that have been established to operate a product certification program. Accreditation ensures that every certification body produces certifications that are equivalent to one another. CSA, IAPMO, NSF, UL, and WQA are examples of certification bodies that are accredited to certify to at least one or more of these standards.

**Do municipalities have to use certified products?**

Most states have legislation, regulations, or policies requiring certification of products to these standards. The 2012 Survey of ASDWA members found that 47 states and 9 provinces require or recommend NSF/ANSI 60 certification on the municipal level. 46 states and 11 provinces require or recommend NSF/ANSI 61 certification. Even if local policy does not require third party certification, it is still wise to use certified products. Third party certifiers perform on site audits at manufacturing locations at least once a year to ensure the product components, manufacturing methods, and quality control have not changed since the original evaluation. Third party certification is the best way to ensure municipal treatment and distribution components will comply with public health and safety standards.