

## **XIV. DRINKING WATER POLICY**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Portland Community College (PCC or the College) is committed to providing a safe working environment for its staff and students. The following PCC Drinking Water Policy is adopted to ensure that the College's drinking water meets the State of Oregon and federal requirements for safe drinking water.

### **B. PURPOSE**

1. Ensure that drinking water provided at all PCC facilities is safe for consumption.
2. Communicate department and staff purchasing requirements of bottled drinking water (see section G)

### **C. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND AUTHORITY**

1. Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 333 Division 061 – Public Water Systems
2. OAR 437-002-1910.141(b)(1)(i) – Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) Sanitation Standard
3. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
4. National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations (NSDWR) – Non-enforceable guidelines regulating contaminants that may cause cosmetic effects (such as skin or tooth discoloration) and aesthetic effects (such as taste, odor, or color) in drinking water.

### **D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS**

1. Safety and Risk Services is responsible to:
  - a. Represent the College in its relationship with safety regulatory agencies dealing with water quality issues.
  - b. Oversee the mandatory record keeping programs required by federal and state authorities.

- c. Ensure that water testing is conducted when deemed necessary.
- 2. Financial Services is responsible to:
  - a. Represent the College within the purchasing rules and accounting policies.
  - b. Oversee all bottled water purchases per this policy (see Section G)
  - c. Ensure that drinking water concerns of staff and students are reported to Safety and Risk Services.
- 3. Physical Plant: is responsible to:
  - a. Oversee the maintenance and repair of campus facilities' water systems
  - b. Annually test required backflow and prevention devices.
  - c. Ensure domestic water segregation from non-potable drinking sources.

## **E. DRINKING WATER TEST PARAMETERS**

1. Pipe Degradation Test Parameters: The College's water comes from public water systems that are chlorinated sources where no biological testing is necessary. However, older piping can degrade, resulting in exposures to metals. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established maximum levels for drinking water affected by various metals and contaminants.

The following tests were performed and are recommended or required by EPA standards:

- a. PH Test: Drinking water should test between 6.0 and 9.0 pH.
- b. Specific Conductance Test: This is screening for levels of dissolved solids. The scale is:
  - (i) Less than 100: -Soft Water (low mineral levels)
  - (ii) 100-500: -Average Well Water
  - (iii) Over 500: -Hard Water with possible elevated salts

- (iv) Over 1000: -High salt content; less desirable drinking water
- c. Alkalinity: This is measure of the water's ability to act as a buffer against corrosion of pipes. In general, levels of less than 50 will have corrosive tendencies to metal pipes or plumbing fixtures.
- d. Total Dissolved Solids recommended level as less than 500.
- e. Various metals are tested that include: calcium, cadmium, copper, chromium, lead, nickel, sodium, zinc and iron.

## **F. PCC DRINKING WATER TEST RESULTS**

Public water systems are required to be maintained and tested regularly by a local water district or water system owner. In those cases independent sampling of the water supply is not necessary unless specific circumstances indicate some defect is present.

PCC has responded to staff concerns about the quality of its drinking water by having the drinking water tested. Samples of drinking water were taken from many drinking water supplies at different PCC facilities. All of the samples found the drinking water to be safe with no hazardous compounds found. A few samples did detect elevated levels of iron. Iron is not regulated by the EPA or the Oregon Health Division but is listed in the recommended NSDWR standard. Excessive iron intake is not considered a significant hazard but it does degrade the quality of the water by adding color and taste. The recommendation is to flush water lines prior to drinking the water, which should reduce the iron level.

## **G. BOTTLED WATER PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION**

There are times when it is necessary for a College department to purchase bottled water. However, purchasing bottled water for personal use is considered to be an inappropriate use of public funds.

The following situations are authorized reasons to purchase drinking water with PCC departmental funds:

1. Health and Safety: The drinking water has been tested and found to be unsafe per applicable state and federal regulations and standards.
2. Unavailability: Drinking water is not available onsite where a class is sponsored.

3. Formal Testing Center: Faculty and students are not allowed to leave an area during formal testing.
4. Sale of water: Bottled water is purchased by auxiliary services for resale.
5. Exception to Prohibited Expenditure List: Item 7 exempts and allows refreshments for business meetings, business lunches, breakfasts or dinners, and meals authorized in the travel policy (ORS 244). Bottled water is included.

## **H. POLICY CONCLUSION**

PCC considers the water that is provided by the public water system to its facilities to meet the State of Oregon and federal requirements for drinking water, and therefore deems its drinking water safe. PCC is not responsible for providing bottled water to staff and students. Drinking fountains are available in PCC facilities. Staff and students who are concerned about the quality of drinking water at the College may bring their own bottled water on campus.