

**CHAMPLAIN WATER DISTRICT WAS THE FIRST WATER SUPPLIER IN THE NATION TO RECEIVE THE “EXCELLENCE IN WATER TREATMENT AWARD” FOR COMPLETION OF ALL FOUR PHASES OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFE WATER PROGRAM**

An independent eight-person team performed Champlain Water District’s (CWD) onsite Phase IV Comprehensive Performance Evaluation during the week of May 17, 1999. This (3) day onsite evaluation encompassed fifty separate assessment parameters in the areas of facility design, and associated administrative, operational, and maintenance practices and capabilities. The review was conducted to identify any factors that may be adversely impacting the water treatment facility’s capability to achieve continuous optimal performance protective of public health. Once potential performance limiting factors are identified, they are classified according to the following guidelines:

- A = Major effect on a long term repetitive basis
- B = Moderate effect on routine basis, or major effect on a periodic basis
- C = Minor effect

Not only did the Champlain Water District “pass” the Comprehensive Performance Evaluation, the Assessment Team stated that CWD was the first water utility, since protocol inception in 1988, that did not have any performance limiting factors identified during the extensive onsite evaluation. Champlain Water District is Vermont’s largest regional public water supplier, serving 68,000 people in twelve municipal water systems in Chittenden County. CWD’s receipt of the first “Excellence in Water Treatment Award” in the country is a culmination of ten years of staff effort. Following water treatment upgrades beginning in 1989 to further protect public health, CWD has extensively researched optimization of its upgraded water treatment processes. CWD has also made numerous regional and national presentations on its process optimization efforts, with many of these papers being published in both the New England Water Works (NEWWA), and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Journals.

CWD was the fifth water utility in the country to receive recognition for successful completion of the Program’s Phase III, Self-Assessment requirements, in 1997. CWD was recognized as the first water supplier in the nation to successfully complete all four phases of the Partnership for Safe Water Program during Opening Ceremonies of the New England Water Works Annual Conference on September 20, 1999 at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in South Burlington, VT. CWD was also recognized for this achievement at AWWA’s Water Quality Technology Conference on November 1, 1999, in Tampa, Florida. In June 2004 CWD was presented with the Five Year Anniversary Partnership for Safe Water Excellence in Treatment Award, in Orlando, FL, at the AWWA Annual Conference for continuing to meet all Phase IV requirements on an annual reporting basis. As of 2009, there are only five other water treatment facilities in the U.S. that have attained this “Excellence in Water Treatment” status which is the pinnacle of treatment optimization for public health protection. For the past ten years since 1999, CWD has maintained this award status through successful submission of an annual report that is reviewed for water quality test results, as well as the demonstration and documentation of operational tenacity toward continuous quality improvement as required by the Partnership for Safe Water program.

The *Cryptosporidium* outbreak in Milwaukee in 1993 certainly raised the awareness of the susceptibility of drinking water to protozoan contamination. Many water utilities began a critical review of their operating procedures related to protecting the public from microbial pathogens. Formation of the voluntary Partnership for Safe Water Program in 1995 allowed a standardized procedure to be applied in the assessment of surface water treatment facilities on a national scale. It was equally important for the regulatory community and water suppliers to proactively work together on this Cryptosporidium threat, realizing that federal legislation was not the immediate solution, due to the analytical difficulties in reliably testing, and enumerating the viability of this specific organism.

Presently, the Partnership for Safe Water Utility membership (January 2009) collectively serves a combined population of more than 85 million people, or nearly two-thirds of U.S. citizens served by surface water sources.

The Partnership for Safe Water is sponsored by the following major drinking water organizations:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- American Water Works Association (AWWA)
- Water Works Research Foundation (WRF)
- Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA)
- Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA)
- National Association of Water Companies (NAWC)

The goals of the Partnership for Safe Water include:

1. Improved public health protection above and beyond EPA regulations
2. Cooperative partnering between regulatory agencies, water suppliers, and the public.
3. Recognition for supplying a high quality drinking water with tenacity toward improved public health protection

The four phases of the Partnership Program are as follows:

- I. Written commitment to program requirements for Phases I, II, and III
- II. Collection of required water quality data in standardized Partnership format
- III. Submit utility Self Assessment Report to be reviewed by Partnership’s Performance Effectiveness Assessment Committee
- IV. Final “voluntary” phase requirements include an assessment of the participating water utility by an independent team of investigators, following the updated Comprehensive Performance Evaluation protocol, which is part of the National Composite Correction Program that has been in place since 1988.

