



CITY OF ATLANTA
City Auditor's Office
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October 2018

Performance Audit:

Water Quality Testing

What We Found

The city has implemented key components of the Safe Drinking Water Act intended to ensure compliance and safe drinking water for its customers. The Department of Watershed Management is responsible for treating and testing the water to ensure that contaminants in tap water do not exceed maximum levels set by law and for reporting water quality results to the state. The department is also responsible for notifying customers if water fails to meet water quality standards.

The city's two water treatment plants use a multi-step process to treat raw water that is consistent with state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) rules. The department has at least one certified operator on duty at all times. Water monitoring occurs continuously using the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system (SCADA) and operators sample water to verify the SCADA information. Drinking water plants keep records of water quality, as required by state rules.

The department meets standards for routine testing throughout the distribution system, collecting more samples than EPD requires. The Department of Watershed Management tests on average more than 265 water samples per month - 240 samples are required based on the city's service population. The department maintains a certified laboratory to test samples, consistent with state rules.

While the Department of Watershed Management met its 36-hour target for responding to customer complaints regarding water quality, it does not track and monitor the amount of time to resolve complaints. We could not assess compliance for 6% of the complaints because information entered into the service order management system was either incorrect or missing.

Why We Did This Audit

We undertook this audit because the Department of Watershed Management's Office of Water Treatment & Reclamation had the second highest risk score in our 2017 risk assessment. The office is responsible for operating the city's drinking water plants and storage facilities and complying with all applicable regulatory requirements, including the Safe Drinking Water Act. Our audit reviews the Department of Watershed Management's processes for testing and reporting water quality.

What We Recommended

To ensure timely and accurate resolution of water quality complaints from customers, the Commissioner of the Department of Watershed Management should:

- create a service level agreement to measure the water quality complaint resolution, tracking the time that it takes to resolve the complaint from the date of the customer call
- ensure that work order dates are correctly entered into the service order management system to be able to accurately track performance

For more information regarding this report, please use the "contact" link on our website at www.atlaudit.org

Management Responses to Audit Recommendations

Summary of Management Responses

Recommendation #1: We recommend the Commissioner of the Department of Watershed Management create a service level agreement to measure the water quality complaint resolution, tracking the time that it takes to resolve the complaint from the date of the customer call.

Response & Proposed Action: Create a SLA of a certain number of business days to resolve water quality complaints. We will adjust so that for the associated service request, the start date will be when the call is received, and the end date will be when the issue is resolved and service request is closed. We will review our history of activity as well as any other relevant information to ensure that the SLA is reasonable. **Agree**

Timeframe: December 2018

Recommendation #2: We recommend the Commissioner of the Department of Watershed Management ensure that work order dates are correctly entered into the service order management system to be able to accurately track performance.

Response & Proposed Action: Perform weekly audits of DWQC work orders to ensure accurate and complete data entry. **Agree**

Timeframe: October 2018