



**American Water Works
Association**

Utility Member Benefit

Government Affairs Office
1300 Eye Street NW
Suite 701W
Washington, DC 20005
T 202.628.8303
F 202.628.2846

Headquarters
6666 West Quincy Avenue
Denver, CO 80235-3098
Washington, DC 20005
T 303.794.7711
F 303.795.1989
www.awwa.org

The Authoritative Resource for Safe Water[®]

Public Affairs Advisory

TO: AWWA Member Utilities

FROM: AWWA Public Affairs

DATE: September 24, 2010

Who: Water utilities
What: DEA Prescription Drug Take-back Initiative
When: Saturday, September 25, 2010

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is coordinating a National Take-back Day tomorrow, Sept. 25, to prevent drug abuse and theft. Medications will be collected from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. local time at sites throughout the United States. Local take-back locations can be found on the DEA's web site at www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/takeback.

While the event is focused on preventing drug misuse and abuse, it may also spawn media inquiries about the impact of medications being flushed down toilets. Water utilities may be contacted by local media or customers about pharmaceutical compounds in drinking water. AWWA has helpful information available at [drinktap.org](http://www.drinktap.org) at the following link:

<http://www.drinktap.org/consumerdnn/Home/WaterInformation/WaterQuality/PharmaceuticalsPPCPs/tabid/73/Default.aspx>

U.S. EPA has information on pharmaceutical compounds available here:

<http://www.epa.gov/ppcp>

Suggested Utility Talking Points

- We encourage our customers to take advantage of opportunities such as the DEA's National Take-Back Initiative to properly dispose of the prescription medications we use in our daily lives.
- The water community is committed to protecting public health. Water professionals are researching the occurrence of pharmaceutical compounds in drinking water supplies and are paying close attention to health effects research in this area.

- Water professionals have the technology today to detect more substances – at lower levels – than ever before.
- The fact that a substance is detectable does not mean the substance is harmful to humans. To date, research has not demonstrated an impact on human health from pharmaceutical compounds in drinking water.
- As a society, we should also encourage policies that protect source water from contaminants introduced by pesticides, gasoline or industrial products. A cost-effective way to ensure safe water at the tap is to keep our source waters clean.

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