

agencies having jurisdiction.” In Alabama the approving agency of any bottled water source is ADEM, whereas the regulatory agency responsible for approving the plant and processes used to bottle and distribute water intrastate is the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) inspections section. The regulatory authority of the FDA is involved in plant inspections and bottling processes should the product be shipped interstate. FDA regulations define bottled water as, “water that is intended for human consumption and that is sealed in bottles or other containers with no added ingredients except that it may optionally contain safe and suitable antimicrobial agents.” On the other hand, the definition used by ADEM and EPA for a public water system is, “a system that provides piped water for human consumption and that (1) has at least 15 service connections, or (2) regularly serves at least 25 persons at least 60 days per year.”

Regulations on bottled water published by FDA were revised May 13, 1996, giving the product a standard of identity. This revision should help consumers understand more about the sources that are used. FDA has provided source definitions for: artesian water, ground water, well water, spring water, and community water systems. FDA has distinguished what is considered mineral water and has identified the standards from which mineral water is exempt. These changes follow the adoption by FDA of several EPA “Primary Drinking Water Standards” which are MCLs based on health or safety reasons. The EPA “Secondary Drinking Water Standards” adopted by FDA are based on only aesthetic factors. Water quality standards for public water systems have been a part of public water system requirements for several years and many of the same water quality standards required of public water systems are

For many reasons an increasing number of American consumers have turned to bottled water as their primary source of drinking water. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates the public water supplies in the State except for bottled water. Unlike public water supplies, the regulation of bottled water is conducted by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Bottled water is considered a “food,” therefore, it is subject to requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. This pamphlet is to provide readers with basic information about bottled water and the connection ADEM has with the regulations and distribution of bottled water products.

ADEM regulates public water supplies by using established water quality standards that all public water systems in the state must follow. Regulations have been adopted that set water quality maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for microbiological, inorganic, organic, and radiological contaminants that public water systems must periodically monitor and not exceed. Furthermore, ADEM has established regulations that govern the variety of sources that may be considered for public water supply use.

The FDA regulations provide that any source for bottled water must be from an approved source, which means the source, “has been inspected, and the water sampled, analyzed, and found to be of a safe and sanitary quality according to the applicable laws and regulations of the State and local government

now required of bottled water. A 1978 Memorandum of Understanding between FDA and EPA assigns authority to control substances in drinking water to EPA to avoid duplicative and inconsistent regulations.

To date, FDA has adopted 19 of EPA’s 21 Primary Drinking Water Standards for water quality. FDA has adopted eleven (11) of EPA’s twelve (12) Secondary Drinking Water Standards. Monitoring for the volatile organic chemicals (VOC’s) & synthetic organic chemicals (SOC’s) has been a bottled water requirement for only a few years. Added to the list, bottled water products must monitor:

<u>Additions</u>	<u>Was</u>
13 VOC compounds	9 VOC
23 SOC compounds	6 SOC

In the Administrative Code Division 7 regulations, ADEM has procedures for development and approval of a water source to be used for public consumption. The same source construction requirements and water quality standards of public supplies apply to potential bottled water sources. Readers are encouraged to obtain the Department’s regulations on ground water sources to understand that which is necessary for source water approval.

The Federal regulations on aspects of bottling water are published in Title 21, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Food & Drug Administration. Sections on water quality, facilities, processing, and controls are found in Parts 110, 129 and 165.

**IS BOTTLED WATER SAFER THAN TAP WATER?**

If both the public water system and the bottled water producer are in full compliance with their respective regulations, then either source of water should be suitable for drinking. Bottled water is usually purchased to avoid disagreeable taste and odor found in some water supplies. Both EPA and FDA regulations specify that if water quality standards of either a public water system or a bottled water product are not met, then the respective supplier must provide public notification alerting users of the deficiencies.

product monitoring, and plant construction requirements, please contact the Division of Food, Milk & Lodging, ADPH, telephone (334)613-5375. Questions concerning the source approval should be directed to ADEM, Water Supply Branch, P. O. Box 301463, Montgomery, AL 36130, telephone (334)271-7790.

For information on FDA bottled water regulations, contact:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Federal Office Building #9, Room 5807  
200 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202)485-0023

or call the EPA:

Safe Drinking Water Hotline  
(800)426-4791 or (202)382-5533

For information on the marketing aspects of bottled water products contact:

International Bottled Water Association  
113 North Henry Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703)683-5213

## bottled water information



Alabama Department of  
Environmental Management  
Drinking Water Branch  
Post Office Box 301463  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130  
(334) 271-7773

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## BOTTLED WATER

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ADEM does not approve or inspect the operation of bottled water plant facilities. For information on the bottling plant procedures,

Who is responsible  
and other