

Don't Make Your CCR Carry All the Water

You are required by law to create and make available to your customers a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). But, the CCR has been proven ineffective at increasing confidence. In fact, people who read a CCR are likely to trust their drinking water less.⁴

So, when it comes to communicating about your water quality, the CCR, issued once per year, can't carry all the weight of your water quality communications. You must do more. That's the whole point of this Toolkit – to help you communicate all year about your drinking water quality. While we offer other ideas for communication, it's important to take a look at your CCR and see if there are any changes you can make to improve it.

Make sure your CCR is the best it can be

One of the reasons the CCR is often overlooked by customers is because it often looks hard to read. One of the main factors that contributes to this is the design. Small text size and pages that are crowded with information are both unappealing to the eye and hard to read. So, make sure the text is at least 11-point size, and create more space between paragraphs and images. Spread the information over more pages to give the eyes and brain a chance to take in the information. Add imagery of your water source, your employees, and stock photos of people enjoying water. People's faces draw people in.

Free templates for creating your CCR in Word or Squarespace are available for download at www.policyinnovation.org/water/ccr-template. More information can be found on the next page.

Engaging in a proactive communication strategy will:



- Decrease the odds of being selected by an advocacy group for a future negative media event
- Increase your ease in responding effectively to a negative media event
- Increase your community's understanding and support for the services you provide
- Increase your community's perception of you as a leader and trusted source for information

Lack of communication sets you up to:

- Experience the worst if you find yourself in a media challenge
- Lose support for future rate increases
- Lose support for infrastructure needs
- Decrease community understanding and appreciation of the services you provide



5 Ways to Maximize the Impact of Your CCR

	
DO	DON'T
Commit to improving at least one thing in your CCR each year	Don't get overwhelmed. There are lots of ways to make small improvements to a CCR – and many other ways to communicate with your community
Include a reference or link to your CCR information on all materials	Don't only promote the CCR once per year
Create a website dedicated to water quality information	Don't bury your CCR webpage on the website where it's hard to find
Center water quality in all messaging and branding	Don't forget that water quality is a core element of your brand
If you don't know what your customers think of your utility and your water, ask them	Don't assume your customers know you, trust you, like your water



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Resources

FREE CCR TEMPLATE

www.policyinnovation.org/water/ccr-template

An improved CCR template was created to integrate these do and don'ts. This template is free for anyone to use. It can help you make your CCR clearer, more engaging, and more accessible to broader audiences. You can also pick and choose pieces from the template to include in your current CCR.

This template is approved by the EPA and ODW staff.

It was created by Raftelis in partnership with the Environmental Policy and Innovation Committee (EPIC).

You can access the free Word doc template, free Squarespace template, and instructions for use here:

www.vahealthcatalyst.org

EPA'S IWRITER

https://ordspub.epa.gov/ords/safewater/f?p=140:LOGIN_DESKTOP

EPA's iWriter tool makes it a bit easier to generate a CCR, though it serves as more of a way to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act than a true communications piece.

Mailers and Info-graphics

Some utilities have gone a step further to ensure their customers know about the CCR and get the information they need and want in a format they can understand. Instead of mailing the actual CCR to each household, they post their CCR as a PDF to their website and they mail something else to every household – a brief, colorful piece that talks about the CCR, its importance, and some of the most critical information it contains that is of interest to customers. It offers a link to the full CCR for those who want it, but serves as a consumer-friendly summary of key points. Here's an example from Charlotte Water.



ADDITIONAL CCR
RESOURCES CAN
BE FOUND IN THE
RESOURCE LIBRARY

2020 gave our community so many things to worry about.

Water quality was not one of them.

Our Commitment

Charlotte Water employees are trusted experts, performing the many complicated tasks required to deliver high quality, clean drinking water to our families and neighbors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Why Are You Getting This?

Every year, North Carolina requires each drinking water supplier to publish a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). Find ours at www.CLWaterWQReport.org, along with results from our water quality testing. The report in your hands summarizes the detailed and fairly technical information published in the CCR, along with information about how we served our community last year during the pandemic.

2020: Another year with **zero water quality violations.**

Results of Pride in Our Work

Every Charlotte Water employee is committed to performing their duties with excellence and in line with industry best practices. Our hard work pays off when we consistently deliver a high quality product to your home at a dramatically lower cost than bottled water.

Cost of Water per Hundred Gallons



Water Quality Testing

Our top priority is making sure that the water you use to wash your hands, bathe your children, and prepare healthy meals meets all state and federal drinking water standards.

Our scientists and water quality professionals perform more than 195,000 tests per year on your drinking water to assure its safety.

According to public health experts at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, drinking water – and even bottled water – may reasonably be expected to contain very small amounts of impurities. It is important to note that the water is still safe even when tests reveal the presence of impurities that are below key levels.

Regulated
contaminates we test for

150+

Unregulated
contaminates we test for

740+

Individual laboratory tests
performed in 2020

Approximately
195,000

2020's Notable Detected Impurities

Detected Impurities	What is it?	Why We Test	Link Source?	Was it a Safety Concern at the Local Level?
Microbes (Bacteria, Viruses, E. coli, & Cryptosporidium)	Very small organisms	Common people sick	Naturally Present in Environment	✓ No Concern
Turbidity	Measure of the cloudiness of our filtering	Doesn't clear the water, the better	Common soil runoff	✓ No Concern
Fluoride	Naturally occurring compound, additive prevents tooth decay	High levels can cause stains on teeth	Essential for dental health	✓ No Concern
Copper and Lead	Elemental metals	High levels can cause health issues	Corrosion of pipes (leaking, staining, discolored water)	✓ No Concern
Disinfection byproducts (Trihalomethanes, Haloacetic acids, Haloacetonitriles)	Byproducts of disinfection process	High levels can cause cancer	Our water purification process	✓ No Concern

For Detailed
Results >>

Visit our water quality website at
www.CLWaterWQReport.org

CHARLOTTE
WATER

2020 Drinking Water Quality Report – Published May 2021 – www.CharlotteWater.org