



Enforcement News

Lab in LA County to pay \$266,900 after investigation finds it missed deadlines for thousands of tests

Late reporting of results is a threat to water quality, human health

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LOS ANGELES - A Southern California environmental testing laboratory that failed to report thousands of drinking water test results by required deadlines has agreed to pay a \$266,900 penalty to the State Water Resources Control Board's [Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program](#).

The case involves Eurofins Eaton Analytical, a laboratory in Monrovia that handles many samples for water systems throughout the state, making the impact of the delayed reporting far-reaching. According to the board's investigation, the lab failed to report 2,633 test results on time from June to August 2022.

Laboratories performing drinking water analyses play a critical role in the protection of public health because they notify water systems and regulators about potential water quality threats. Late reporting of test results delays actions to address water quality concerns and impedes the timely notification to the public about a possible threat.

"Accurate and timely data reporting is critical to our decision-making, and we can't risk delay or errors because it jeopardizes our ability to protect the quality of drinking water for the public," said Darrin Polhemus, deputy director of the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water.

The board's accreditation program launched an investigation of the laboratory after receiving multiple complaints from drinking water regulators about missing results. The investigation found a systemic failure to report drinking water test results electronically, which was caused by the failed implementation of a new electronic data management system and unplanned absences of laboratory staff.

The laboratory cooperated with the board and has taken action to correct the failures, including manually uploading test results that were not submitted by the electronic system.



Laboratories are required to notify the water system and the board within 24 hours if acute contaminants such as E. coli or nitrate exceed the maximum safe level established by the state are found in water sampling results. These contaminants can cause short-term health effects within hours or days of exposure. Exceedances of chronic contaminants, such as lead and copper, can cause health effects after continuous long-term exposure.

Environmental laboratories that conduct water sample testing in California are required to be accredited through the board's program to give regulators and the public confidence in the data produced. Enforcement penalties are paid to the Environmental Laboratory Improvement Fund, which funds the accreditation program's activities.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.