

### Providing customers with timely, accurate information: The Water Line

- The Water Line is a single point of contact for customers who are experiencing water quality or water pressure issues. By providing a single point of contact for these specialized inquiries we enhance customer service through timely and accurate responses. In addition, call volume is reduced to the Call Center, which helps alleviate hold times for customers calling about billing issues. The goal of the Water Line is to respond to all calls on the same business day.
  - In 2011-2012, 1682 calls were logged to the Water Line. All were responded to on the same day.
  - 92% (1851) of these calls were resolved over the phone on first contact. This is not only beneficial to the customer but saves considerable Bureau resources by eliminating the need to dispatch a truck and crew.
  - Water Line staff work to educate customers on common water quality and pressure problems and how to resolve them. Simple suggestions, such as rinsing off an aerator to alleviate restricted flow or flushing pipes to improve water quality, often go a long way to resolving customer problems.
  - 8% (161) of calls made to Water Line required a field visit. (See Chart below)
- Staff are a vital partner in the Lead Hazard Reduction program. They answer customer requests for lead test kits and, when they are returned, process them for analysis by the Lab. For this period staff sent out 2452 kits to Portland Water Bureau Customers in response to requests from customers. 518 test kits were sent to the Wholesale Water District Partners.
- Staff handles Data Entry on returned test kits, interprets results for customers and offers tips on how to reduce exposure to lead via drinking water.
- 776 kits were returned and processed for Portland customers. 186 kits were returned and processed from Wholesale customers. Of these tests Portland had 16 tests over the action level (MCL) and required additional education and were offered the opportunity of additional testing to determine the best way to lower the lead levels in their tap water.
- Staff coordinates with Water Bureau wholesale partners who participate in the Lead in Water Education Program (LWET) to alert the purveyors when one of their customers has a high lead result from the test. During this period there were 10 tests over the action level.

### Water Line Calls

#### Number and Nature of complaints for FY 2011-2012

| Area                 | N  | NE  | NW | SE  | SW  | S | E | W | Total |
|----------------------|----|-----|----|-----|-----|---|---|---|-------|
| Informational        | 54 | 156 | 41 | 188 | 125 |   | 2 | 1 | 567   |
| <b>Water Quality</b> |    |     |    |     |     |   |   |   |       |
| Color                | 34 | 106 | 26 | 193 | 68  |   | 1 |   | 428   |
| Odor                 | 7  | 19  | 3  | 16  | 14  |   |   |   | 59    |
| Taste                | 3  | 13  | 1  | 6   | 5   |   |   |   | 28    |
| Dirty Water          | 12 | 43  | 7  | 56  | 67  |   | 1 |   | 186   |
| <b>Pressure</b>      |    |     |    |     |     |   |   |   |       |
| High                 | 4  | 3   | 3  | 14  | 8   |   |   |   | 32    |
| Low                  | 7  | 14  | 8  | 32  | 13  |   |   | 1 | 75    |
| Fluctuating          | 1  | 6   | 1  | 9   | 4   |   |   |   | 21    |
| <b>Total</b>         |    |     |    |     |     |   |   |   |       |
| Water Quality        | 67 | 198 | 46 | 303 | 177 |   | 2 |   | 793   |
| Pressure             | 17 | 39  | 20 | 78  | 39  |   |   | 1 | 194   |

#### Resolution Rate:

|              |       |     |
|--------------|-------|-----|
| By phone     | 1,851 | 92% |
| In the field | 161   | 8%  |
| Total        | 2,012 |     |

Water Line calls are compiled and distributed weekly to various Operations groups to inform operational decision making. The nature of complaints are analyzed to identify any cluster of calls (i.e. color, dirty water) in any one area that may be due to operational problems in the distribution system thereby allowing the bureau to rectify them at the earliest possible opportunity.

- **Survey Cards (see Attachment D)** Survey cards have been updated to include a box which asks "Want A Call Back?" with space for respondents name and phone number. This allows staff to follow up with callers who were not satisfied with the response they received. It allows staff to do further research to assist the customer.