Certified Safe

NSF Intl. now offers StaySafer certification, a program that ensures food and water safety, to hospitality centers around the world. *Water Quality Products* Editorial Assistant Chelsea Corbin recently spoke with NSF’s Sonia Acuña-Rubio and Carolyn Gilliland about the program, designed to build travelers’ confidence in the water safety and quality of their travel destinations.

**Chelsea Corbin:** Why is StaySafer certification important both to travelers and the hospitality industry?

**Sonia Acuña-Rubio:** The NSF StaySafer program was designed by water and food safety experts at NSF Intl. to help hotels, resorts and other hospitality establishments protect the health and safety of their guests by helping reduce the incidence of contaminated food, water, or ice. This is essential, as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 10 million overseas travelers contract illness from food and drinking water, which can hurt a hotel’s reputation and lower the rate of returning guests. The program provides companies in the hospitality industry with a credible means of demonstrating the safety of their food and water to travelers, agencies and hotel rating websites. Consumers gain a program that enables them to identify safer hospitality establishments that have a demonstrated commitment to water and food safety.

**Corbin:** How is StaySafer certification measured?

**Carolyn Gilliland:** NSF food and water experts review an establishment’s written policies and procedures for both its food service operations and water systems, including food safety practices and training policies, water source and treatment systems, hotel schematics, and plumbing blueprints. The hospitality establishment then is subject to an onsite inspection. Water systems are evaluated against NSF Draft Standard 432: DrinkSafer: Water Safety Standard for the Global Hotel Industry, which verifies the safety of the design and maintenance of hotel water and ice systems. As part of this inspection, water and ice samples are collected from various locations within the hospitality establishment and tested for chemical and microbial contaminants. To ensure ongoing compliance, establishments also undergo regularly scheduled testing and evaluation for microbiological and chemical contamination of drinking water and ice. Once the establishment has demonstrated its compliance with the auditing and testing requirements of the program, NSF StaySafer certification is granted.

**Corbin:** What is NSF Standard 432?

**Gilliland:** NSF Standard 432 outlines the requirements of the drinking water safety component of the NSF StaySafer program. It specifies the scope of the audits and the guidelines for the water and ice sampling and testing. This includes the sampling locations within the hotel; frequency of sample collection; which microbiological, chemical and physical tests are conducted; the analytical methods; and the drinking water criteria for the detected analytes. It also outlines the certification policies for the drinking water safety component of the program.

**Corbin:** What is most challenging about ensuring safe drinking water in hotels?

**Acuña-Rubio:** Ensuring safe drinking water in hotels is very important from a public health and safety point of view. Therefore, when specifying review procedures for hotel water systems and drinking water sampling locations and testing methods, it is essential to take into account the wide variety of potential health hazards associated with water sources and water systems. Many of the hotels we are targeting may not be supplied with high-quality water year round, so determining the likely contaminants in the drinking water source, combined with the best methods of preventing these contaminants, proves to be a challenging task.

**Corbin:** In which parts of the world and types of hotels is StaySafer certification most critical?

**Acuña-Rubio:** Any type of hotel would benefit from the NSF StaySafer certification program; however, most consumers are worried about the safety of food and water in hotels in located in developing countries.

**Corbin:** What tips should travelers keep in mind when consuming water in the U.S. and abroad?

**Acuña-Rubio:** Ensure that the water you are consuming is from a reputable source. If you are unsure, drink bottled water instead of tap water, especially when traveling abroad. Also, begin to look for the NSF StaySafer mark when researching and staying in hotels. That is one key step in knowing that the water you will be drinking is safer.

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For more information on this subject write in 1007 on this issue’s reader service card.

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**WHO Unveils Household Water Treatment Product Testing Program**

The World Health Organization (WHO) soon will begin validating household water treatment products for use around the globe with its International Scheme to Evaluate Household Water Treatment Technologies. Under this fee-based program, certified manufacturers and products will be listed on the WHO website. The program is intended to aid populations in developing countries with limited capacity to subject manufacturers to evaluations of product performance.

**World Water Council Selects Water Forum Host City**

During its 51st board of governors meeting, the World Water Council selected the city of Brasilia, Brazil, to host the eighth World Water Forum in 2018. The vote remains conditional upon the signature of an agreement between the World Water Council and the hosts of the forum.

**EPA Marks Sixth Annual Fix a Leak Week**

U.S. EPA’s WaterSense program encouraged Americans to find and fix leaks during its sixth annual Fix a Leak Week, March 17 to 23. Under the theme “Chasing Leaks,” many WaterSense partners organized running races, hands-on demonstrations, school contests and other community events and outreach to promote leak detection and repair. WaterSense jump-started the week by hosting a Fix a Leak Week “Twitter party” on March 17.

**New Drought Poll Reveals Californians Want Action**

According to a poll conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council, California voters are more concerned about the drought than any other major issue. An overwhelming majority favors strategies to stretch local water supplies, including water recycling, rainwater harvesting and water efficiency measures, as the top solution to California’s water woes. Seventy-seven percent of voters would be willing to pay more on their water bills in order to increase sustainable local water supplies.

**AWWA Commemorates Women’s History Month**

The American Water Works Assn. (AWWA) celebrated Women’s History Month in March. Throughout the month, AWWA and its members paid tribute to the many contributions by women to the water industry. The month included events and other activities at public and private water and wastewater utilities across the U.S., highlighting the critical role women have played in the history of the water community.

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