

95% Confidence interval	A range of values to express how large the random error for an estimate is likely to be. Technically, if we hypothetically repeated a study 100 times, 95 times out of the 100, the true value of our estimate would fall within the upper and lower limit of this confidence interval.
Action level	The level of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.
Acute health effect	An effect occurring within hours or days that may result from exposure to certain contaminants, for example, carbon monoxide poisoning.
Acute myocardial infarction	More commonly known as a heart attack. A medical condition that occurs when the blood supply to a part of the heart is interrupted. The resulting blood or oxygen shortage causes damage and potential death of heart tissue.
Admission date	The date of admission to the hospital.
Adverse health effect	A change in body function or cell structure that may lead to a disease.
Age-adjusted	A measure that has been statistically modified to minimize the effect of different age distributions in different populations.
Age-group	People grouped together based on age.
Age-specific rate	A rate calculated for a specific age category.
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)	Based in Atlanta, Georgia, a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Air monitoring	Sampling for and measuring of pollutants present in the atmosphere.
Air pollution	Substances in the air that are either present in an environment where they do not belong, or present at levels greater than they should be.
Air quality	A measure of what chemicals, particulate matter, or biological materials may be in the air.
Air Quality Index (AQI)	An index for reporting daily air quality. It specifies how clean or polluted the air is and what associated health effects might be a concern. The AQI focuses on health effects that may be experienced within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. EPA calculates the AQI for five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particle pollution (also known as particulate matter), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.

Air Quality Standards	The level of pollutants prescribed by regulations that are not to be exceeded during a given time in a defined area.
Air Quality System (AQS)	A database that contains ambient air pollution data collected by EPA, state, local, and tribal air pollution control agencies from thousands of monitoring stations. http://www.epa.gov/ttn/airs/airsaqs/basic_info.htm
Air toxins	Air pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as reproductive and birth defects, or adverse environmental effects.
Ambient air	Air that is outside, not inside, of a building.
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)	ALS is a neurodegenerative disease that affects both upper and lower motor neurons. This disease is characterized by the progressive deterioration and loss of these motor neurons. The loss of nerve stimulus to specific muscles results in atrophy and progressive weakness that leads to paralysis.
Anencephaly	Anencephaly is a birth defect that affects the closing of the neural tube during pregnancy. The neural tube is a narrow channel that folds and closes during the third and fourth weeks of pregnancy to form the brain and spinal cord. Anencephaly occurs when the portion of the neural tube that forms the brain does not close. This results in the baby lacking parts of the brain, skull, and scalp. Read more about anencephaly: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/Anencephaly.htm
Aquifer	A natural underground layer, often of sand or gravel which contains water.
Arsenic	A silver-gray or white metallic element of the periodic table of elements. It is a naturally occurring metal that is found in the Earth's crust.
Asthma	A disease that affects the lungs, characterized by: contraction of the airway muscles, production of mucous, and swelling of the airways. Asthma may cause repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early-morning coughing.
Asthma Hospital Discharge	A measure indicating an overnight hospital stay was required because of asthma.
Attainment area	An area considered to have air quality as good as or better than the national ambient air quality standards as defined in the Clean Air Act . An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others.

Autism	The most common condition in a group of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). ASDs are developmental disabilities defined by significant impairments in social interaction, communication and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests. Many people with ASDs also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to different sensations.
Autoimmune diseases	A group of more than 80 diseases in which the body's immune system attacks its healthy cells. These diseases can affect many parts of the body.
Average	Numerical result obtained by dividing the sum of values of a factor (such as age of children) by the number of factors (e.g. number of children). Also known as mean.
Benchmark	A standard by which other things can be measured. It sometimes means the best or most desirable value of the variable.
Biomonitoring	The direct measurement of people's exposure to toxic substances in the environment by measuring the substances or metabolites in human specimens, such as blood or urine.
Birth defect	A problem that occurs as a baby develops in the mother's body. A birth defect may affect how the body looks, works, or both. Some birth defects are so serious they can cause a baby to die; others are very minor problems that can be easily repaired.
Birth weight	The first weight of the newborn obtained after birth.
Bladder cancer	Cancer that forms in tissues of the bladder, the organ that stores urine.
Blood lead level (BLLs)	A measure of lead in the body. It is traditionally reported as the number of micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$)
Blood lead level test date	The date blood was taken for a blood lead level test. When this date is not available, it refers to the earliest date from the following: date blood sample was tested, date of blood lead result report, or date the blood sample was received by laboratory.
Blood lead test result	A quantifiable value or values below the method limit of detection from a blood lead test reported in micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$).
Breast cancer	Cancer that forms in tissues of the breast, usually the ducts, tubes that carry milk to the nipple, and lobules, glands that make milk.
Bronchitis	An inflammation of the airways to the lungs. It causes a cough that produces a lot of mucus, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.
Cancer	A disease in which cells in the body grow uncontrollably. It is often named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later.

Cancer cluster	A greater-than-expected number of cancer cases that occurs within a group of people in a geographic area over a period of time. A person may expect that a cancer cluster exists when several loved ones, neighbors, or coworkers are diagnosed with cancer. However, what appears to be a cluster may actually reflect the expected number of cancer cases within the group or area. When considering the possible existence of a cancer cluster in an area, it is important to remember a few key facts: 1) cancer is a common disease, affecting about one in four people in their lifetime; 2) the term cancer refers not to a single disease, but instead to a group of related yet different diseases; 3) a cancer cluster may be due to chance alone, like the clustering of balls on a pool table; and 4) an apparent cancer cluster is more likely to be genuine if the cases consist of one type of cancer, a rare type of cancer, or a type of cancer that is not usually found in an age group.
Carbon monoxide (CO)	An odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems.
Carbon monoxide detectors	A device that detects the presence of the toxic gas carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless and odorless compound produced by incomplete combustion and lethal at high levels.
Carbon monoxide poisoning	Illness that results from exposure to carbon monoxide. The most common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.
Cardiovascular disease	A class of diseases that involves the heart or the blood vessels, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and rheumatic heart disease.
Case-crossover analysis tool (C-CAT)	A computer program used to estimate the short-term health effects of air pollution.
Cerebrovascular disease	Range of disorders in which an area of the brain is temporarily or permanently affected by a loss of blood supply involving one or more blood vessels.
Chart	A type of information graphic that shows information in a tabular form. Charts are often used to aid comprehension of large quantities of data and the relationship between different parts of the data.
Chemical contaminants	Chemicals in the environment that cause harm or discomfort to humans or other living organisms or that damage the environment.
Child (as defined in reference to blood lead level testing)	Any person less than 72 months or under 6 years of age at the time of the blood lead test under consideration.

Child match	The process of “de-duplicating” the Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) data file so that each child is counted only once. For example, one child could be accidentally entered twice, but more importantly for our purposes, a child could have more than one test. Only one child and one test for that child should be counted.
Childhood cancer	Defined two different ways: cancers occurring before age 15 or cancers occurring before age 20.
Childhood lead poisoning	Illness that results from exposure to lead. Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body. It can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and, at very high levels, seizures, coma, and even death.
Childhood leukemia	Cancer of the white blood cells that occurs during childhood. It is the most common type of childhood cancer.
Chronic health effect	A health condition that develops and persists over a long period of time
Classification by exposure gradient	Placing people into categories of risk by level of exposure to a hazard.
Clean Air Act	Under this law, EPA sets limits on how much of a pollutant can be in the air anywhere in the United States. http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/
Cleft Lip with or without Cleft Palate	A cleft lip is an opening in the upper lip. The opening in the lip can be a small slit in the lip or a large opening that goes through the lip into the nose. A cleft palate is an opening in the roof of the mouth, called the palate. A cleft palate can occur when the two sides of the palate do not come together correctly. Read more about cleft lip and cleft palate (http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/cleft.htm).
Cleft Palate without Cleft Lip	A cleft palate is an opening in the roof of the mouth, called the palate. A cleft palate can occur when the two sides of the palate do not come together correctly. Read more about cleft palate (http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/cleft.htm).
Cluster	Cases of disease or health-related condition, which are closely grouped in time and/or place. This term usually refers to cancer and/or birth defects. (See related term: Cancer Cluster.)

Common Assessment Level	The concentration selected by a hydrologist and applied to water-quality data that have variable laboratory reporting levels for a specific compound. The common assessment level is applied to data received from the laboratory and is applied subsequent to the laboratory reporting level. Concentrations reported by the laboratory below the common assessment level are considered as "non-detections" in the calculation of statistics. The highest laboratory reporting level for each constituent through time was used for the common assessment level ($\mu\text{g/L}$ = micrograms per liter; mg/L = milligrams per liter; pCi/L , picocuries per liter).
Community Multiscale Air Quality Model (CMAQ)	A model in which emission and meteorological data are run through computer code that simulates physical and chemical processes in the atmosphere to provide estimated concentrations of pollutants. www.epa.gov/asmdnerl/CMAQ/
Community Water System (CWS)	A public water system that year-round serves residents of a community, subdivision, or mobile home park that has at least 15 service connections or an average of at least 25 residents.
Concentration	Amount of a hazardous substance in a sample.
Confidentiality	Confidentiality means making sure that health information is only seen by people who are authorized to have access to it.
Contaminant	A substance that is either present in an environment where it does not belong or present at levels that might cause harmful health effects.
Content Workgroup (CWG)	A workgroup of the CDC National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program tasked to define appropriate core data and measures to track.
Coronary heart disease	Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common type of heart disease. CHD occurs when the coronary arteries, that supply blood to the heart muscle, become hardened and narrowed due to the plaque buildup. The plaque buildup and the narrowing and hardening of the arteries is called atherosclerosis. Plaques are a mixture of fatty substances including cholesterol and other lipids. Blood flow and oxygen supply to the heart can be reduced or even fully blocked with growing plaque. Plaques may also rupture and cause blood clots that block arteries.
Correlation	Statistical measure of the degree to which variables change together. For example, ER visits resulting from asthma increase when ozone air pollution increases.
Count	A specified numerical value; a number or number amount.
Data element	A specific piece of data, such as an observation or aggregate of individual observations, needed to calculate a value of a measure.

Data limitations	Specific information related to the quality or completeness of the data that will help in understanding.
Data source	An organization or information system providing data for tracking.
Data suppression	Preventing public display of information to protect personal information.
Developmental disability	A diverse group of severe chronic conditions caused by mental and/or physical impairments. People with developmental disabilities have problems with major life activities such as language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living.
Discharge date	The date of discharge from hospital.
Disease definitions	The set of symptoms or laboratory/clinical test results that lead to a diagnosis.
Disinfectant	A chemical, commonly chlorine, chloramines, or ozone, or a physical process, such as ultraviolet light, that inactivates microorganisms.
Disinfection by-products	A family of chemicals that form when disinfectants, such as chlorine used in water treatment, react with bromide and/or naturally occurring organic matter in the water, for example, decomposing plant material.
Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)	Down syndrome is a condition in which a baby is born with an extra chromosome. Chromosomes are small “packages” of genes in the body. They determine how a baby’s body forms during pregnancy and how, as the baby grows in the womb and after birth, the baby’s body functions. Normally, a baby is born with 46 chromosomes. Babies born with Down syndrome have an extra copy of one of these chromosomes. This extra copy changes the body’s and brain’s normal development and causes developmental and physical problems for the baby. Read more about Down Syndrome: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/DownSyndrome.htm
Drinking water	Water that is intended for human consumption and other domestic uses.
Drinking water compliance	The act of meeting all state and federal drinking water regulations.
Drinking water contaminant	Any physical chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in drinking water.

Drinking water exemption	State or EPA permission for a water system not to meet a certain drinking water standard. An exemption allows a system additional time to obtain financial assistance or make improvements in order to come into compliance with the standard. The system must prove that (1) there are compelling reasons (including economic factors) why Maximum Contaminant Level or Treatment Technique cannot be met; (2) the system was in operation on the effective date of the requirement and (3) the exemption will not create an unreasonable risk to public health. The state must set a schedule under which the water system will comply with the standard for which it received an exemption.
Drinking water monitoring	Testing that water systems must perform to detect and measure contaminants. A water system that does not follow EPA's monitoring methodology or schedule is in violation and may be subject to legal action.
Drinking water supply	Water available for drinking.
Drinking water supply distribution system	A network of pipes used to carry treated water from the treatment plant to customers' plumbing systems.
Drinking water treatment technique	A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
Drinking water variance	State or EPA permission not to meet a certain drinking water standard. The water system must prove that (1) even while using the best available treatment method it cannot meet a Maximum Contaminant Level because of the characteristics of the raw water and (2) the variance will not create an unreasonable risk to public health. The state or EPA must review and allow public comment on a variance every three years. States can also grant variances to water systems that serve small populations and which prove that they are unable to afford the required treatment or an alternative water source or to otherwise comply with the standard.
Drinking water violation	A failure to meet any state or federal drinking water regulations.
Drinking water vulnerability assessment	An evaluation of drinking water source quality and its vulnerability to contamination by pathogens and toxic chemicals.
Duplicate records (Hospitalization data)	More than one record for the same person with the same hospital admission data (i.e., all columns have the same information).
Dust	A cloud of finely powdered earth or other matter in the air.

Ecologic linkage	In epidemiology, a relationship based on co-location in time and place. Analysis occurs at the group rather than individual level.
Elevated blood lead level	A child with one venous blood specimen ≥ 10 mg/dL, or any combination of two capillary and/or unknown blood specimens ≥ 10 mg/dL drawn within 12 weeks of each other.
Emergency department	A hospital or primary care department that provides initial treatment to patients with a broad spectrum of illnesses and injuries, some of which may be life-threatening and requiring immediate attention.
Entry point to the Distribution System (EPTDS)	This is the point where the treated water enters the drinking water distribution system
Environmental data	Many different kinds of environmental data exist. Some provide concentrations of chemicals or other substances and in the land, water, or air that people might be exposed to; the data are used to evaluate exposures to these chemicals. Other data provide information about events or facilities that might cause possible environmental exposures but do not provide enough detail to evaluate exposures. These data are often used to make decisions or set priorities for future environmental health data gathering or regulatory activities.
Environmental hazard	A substance or situation in the environment that might adversely affect human health. People may be exposed to physical, chemical, or biological toxins from various environmental sources through air, water, soil, and food.
Environmental health	The branch of public health that is concerned with understanding how the environment affects human health. The environment is the air we breathe, our water, our surroundings, and our food; it is the chemical, physical, and biological toxins that have contact with us every day. Understanding how we interact with the environment is complicated, as is understanding how the environment may affect our health.
Environmental justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, national origin, color or income when developing, implementing and enforcing environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear more than its share of negative environmental impacts.
Environmental monitoring	The measurement of a material in the environment at regular time intervals. Monitoring for contaminants often involves collecting an environmental sample, such as stream water, preparation of the sample in the laboratory, and analysis of the prepared sample.

Environmental public health	Focuses on the relationships between people and their environment, promotes human health and well-being, and fosters a safe and healthful environment. (See related term: Environmental Health)
Environmental public health indicator	Provides information about a population's health status with respect to environmental factors. It can be used to assess health or a factor associated with health, such as a risk factor or an intervention, in a specified population through direct or indirect measures.
Environmental Public Health Tracking	Environmental Public Health Tracking is the ongoing, systematic collection, integration, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of data from environmental hazard monitoring, and from human exposure and health effects surveillance.
Environmental tobacco smoke	Secondhand smoke or tobacco smoke inhaled by someone who is close to a smoker.
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Health advisory (water)	An EPA document that provides guidance and information on contaminants that can affect human health and that may occur in drinking water, but which EPA does not currently regulate in drinking water.
Epidemiology	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in a population; the study of the occurrence and causes of health effects in humans.
Estimated exposure	An assessment or approximation of the contact of an individual or group with a particular substance.
Ethnicity	A term that represents a group based on their cultural and social affiliation, common history and origin, and sense of identification with the group.
Exposure	Contact with a substance by swallowing or breathing or by direct contact such as through the skin or eyes. Exposure may be short term, intermediate duration, or long term.
Exposure pathway	The route a substance takes from where it began, its source, to its end point and how people can come into contact with or get exposed to it.
Fecundity	The physical ability of a woman or couple to conceive and carry a child to term birth. Fecundity and fertility are often used interchangeably.
Fertility	The ability to conceive a child. Fecundity and fertility are often used interchangeably.
Finished water	Water that has been treated and is ready to be delivered to customers.

Fish advisory	A state-issued warning that cautions people about eating contaminated fish caught in local waters.
Gastroschisis	A birth defect in which a portion of an infant's intestines protrude out of the body through a small hole in the body wall beside the umbilical cord. The body wall defect can be small or large and other organs such as the liver can be involved. Read more about Gastroschisis: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/Gastroschisis.htm
Geographic Information System (GIS)	A system for capturing, storing, analyzing, and managing geographic data.
Gestational age	A baby's age in number of weeks since conception.
Graph	A visual representation of data that displays the relationship among variables. Graphs are especially useful for showing broad trends in the data.
Ground water	The supply of fresh water found beneath the Earth's surface, usually in aquifers, which is often used for supplying wells and springs.
Ground water contamination	Any physical chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in ground water
Haloacetic acid- 9 (HAA9)	HAA9 (monochloroacetic acid, dichloroacetic acid, trichloroacetic acid, monobromoacetic acid, dibromoacetic acid) plus bromochloroacetic acid, bromodichloroacetic acid, chlorodibromoacetic acid, and tribromoacetic acid.
Haloacetic acid-5 (HAA5)	The sum of five regulated haloacetic acids (monochloro-, dichloro-, trichloro-, monobromo-, dibromo-). These are other widely occurring classes of disinfection byproducts formed during disinfection with chlorine and chloramine.
Hazard	A factor or exposure that may adversely affect health.
Hazardous waste sites	A location where harmful substances have been released or discarded into the environment.
Health data	Data that provide information about the occurrence of certain diseases and health conditions.
Health effect or health outcome	The disease or health problem itself, such as asthma attacks or birth defects.
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)	A law requiring protection of personal health information. http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/
Healthy homes	Homes that are free from housing-related hazards and deficiencies that cause diseases and injuries.
Heart attack	Also known as acute myocardial infarction. A medical condition that occurs when the blood supply to a part of the heart is interrupted. The resulting blood or oxygen shortage causes damage and potential death of heart tissue.

Heart Disease	A broad term that includes several more specific heart conditions. The most common heart condition in the United States is coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack and other serious conditions.
Heavy metals	There are several definitions for "heavy metals". For Tracking, a heavy metal is defined as metallic chemical elements that has a relatively high density and is toxic at low concentrations. Heavy metals are natural components of the earth's crust. Exposure to heavy metals may occur through diet, the environment, medications, or specific occupations. As trace elements, some heavy metals (e.g. iron, copper, zinc) are essential to the human body. However, even these can cause harm at higher levels.
Herbicide	Chemicals used to control undesirable weeds and plants in agricultural, residential, and water environments.
Hospital transfers	A patient discharged from one facility and readmitted to a second facility on the same day.
Hospitalization/ hospital admission	Condition of being placed or treated as a patient in a hospital as an inpatient. Treatment as an out-patient is not considered hospitalization. For the hospitalization to be considered inpatient, the patient must stay in the hospital at least one night or more.
Housing age	Measured by period in time when a house was built.
Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome	A heart condition that is present at birth, and often is called a congenital heart defect. It is a group of related defects that, together, mean that the left side of the heart is underdeveloped. Read more about Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/HypoplasticLeftHeartSyndrome.htm
Hypospadias	A birth defect among boys in which the opening of the urethra is located somewhere along the underside of the penis instead of at the tip. The urethra is the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. This defect occurs when the urethra does not complete its development during the pregnancy. Read more about Hypospadias: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/Hypospadias.htm
ID	Identification.
Identifying information	Information that might reveal a person's identity.
Incidence	Number of new cases of illness occurring within a specific population over a period of time.
Indicator	For Tracking, an indicator is one or more items, characteristics or other things that will be assessed and that provide information about a population's health status, their environment, and other factors with the goal of allowing us to monitor trends, compare situations, and better understand the link between environment and health. It is assessed through direct and indirect measures (e.g. levels of a pollutant in the environment as a measure of <i>possible</i> exposure) that describe health or a factor associated with health (i.e., environmental hazard, age) in a specified population. Indicators are available within each Content Area.

Infant mortality	Death of an infant in the first year of life.
Infant mortality rate	The number of deaths of infants, one year of age or younger, per 1,000 live births.
Infertility	A condition occurring when a couple cannot get pregnant after one year of trying.
Inorganic contaminants	Mineral-based compounds such as metals, nitrates, and asbestos. These contaminants are naturally-occurring in some water, but can also get into water through farming, chemical manufacturing, and other human activities. EPA has set legal limits on 15 inorganic contaminants in drinking water.
Integrated Pest Management	A common sense, systems-based approach to managing pests that focuses on pest prevention; reduction; and elimination of the conditions that lead to pest infestation. Although it includes some standard pest control techniques, integrated pest management includes four specific components: inspection; monitoring; treatment; and evaluation.
International Classification of Diseases (ICD)	A system produced by an internationally representative group that classifies diseases by giving each a unique code.
Land use	The human modification of natural environment or wilderness into built environment such as fields, pastures, and settlements.
Lead	A naturally occurring bluish-gray metal found in small amounts in the earth's crust. Lead can be found in all parts of our environment. Much of it comes from human activities including burning fossil fuels, mining, and manufacturing.
Leukemia	Cancer of the white blood cells.
Low birth weight	A baby is considered to be of low birth weight when its weight is less than 5.5 lbs, or 2500 grams, at birth. For Tracking, low birth weight is measured among singleton births only.
Lower limb reduction defects	Lower limb reduction defects occur when a part of or the entire leg (lower limb) of a fetus fails to form completely during pregnancy. The defect is referred to as a "limb reduction" because a limb is reduced from its normal size or is missing. Read more about Lower Limb Reduction Defects: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/UL-LimbReductionDefects.htm
Lung cancer	Cancer that forms in tissues of the lung, usually in the cells lining air passages. The two main types are small cell lung cancer and non-small cell lung cancer, diagnosed based on how the cells look under a microscope.
Lung disease	A broad term that refers to many disorders affecting the lungs. Lung disease includes diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
Lymphoma	Cancer that starts in a part of the immune system called the lymphatic system, which is made up of lymph or lymphatic tissue.
Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	The highest level of a contaminant that EPA allows in drinking water. MCLs ensure that drinking water does not pose either a short-term or long-term health risk. EPA sets MCLs at levels that are economically and technologically feasible. Some states set MCLs which are more strict than EPA's.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	The maximum level of a contaminant in drinking water at which no known or anticipated adverse effect on the health of persons would occur, and which allows an adequate margin of safety. Maximum contaminant level goals are non-enforceable health goals.
Maximum Contaminant Level Violation	Failure to keep a contaminant level in drinking water below its Maximum Contaminant Level. (See related term: Maximum Contaminant Level.)
Mean	The average of a list of numbers by calculating the sum of all the members of the list and dividing by the number of items in the list. (See related term: Average.)
Measure	On the Tracking Network, a measure is a summary characteristic or statistic, such as a sum, percentage, or rate. Measures are available for each indicator.
Measure of precision	Degree of certainty for a particular statistic.
Mercury	Mercury is a naturally occurring metal found throughout the environment. It exists in three forms: metallic or elemental mercury; inorganic mercury; and organic mercury. In its metallic form, it is the familiar shiny, silver-white odorless liquid used in thermometers. At room temperature, it can evaporate to form mercury vapor. When mercury combines with other elements such as chlorine, sulfur, and oxygen, it forms inorganic mercury or mercury salts. Organic mercury is formed when mercury combines with carbon. The most common organic mercury compound is methylmercury. Mercury enters the environment from the breakdown of rocks and soil, from volcanic activity, and from human activity such as mining and burning coal.
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	A contiguous area containing counties of relatively high population density, defined by the US Census Bureau.
Microorganisms	Tiny living organisms that can be seen only with the aid of a microscope. Some microorganisms can cause acute health problems when consumed through the environment. Also known as microbes.
Morbidity	State of being ill or diseased. Morbidity is the occurrence of a disease or condition that alters health and quality of life.
Mortality	Death.
Multiple Sclerosis	A chronic, often disabling disease which attacks the nervous system affecting the brain and spinal cord. It slows down or stops messages between the brain and the body leading to vision, muscular, coordination and balance, thinking, and memory problems.
National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)	Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA established limits for six air pollutants to protect public health and the environment. Those air pollutants are carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter of 10 microns or less (PM10), particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5), ozone, and sulfur dioxide. http://www.epa.gov/air/criteria.html

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network	A Web-based, secure network of standardized electronic health and environmental data.
National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program	The Congressionally mandated national effort that will establish a network to enable the ongoing collection, integration, analysis, and interpretation of data about the following factors: (1) environmental hazards, (2) exposure to environmental hazards, and (3) health effects potentially related to exposure to environmental hazards.
Neonatal mortality	An infant death which occurs in the first 27 days of life.
Neurodegenerative disease	A disorder caused by deterioration of the nerve cells.
Nitrate	A water-soluble molecule made of nitrogen and oxygen.
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	Any of a large group of cancers of the immune system. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma begins when a type of white blood cells, either T- or B-cells, become abnormal. The cells then divide again and again, producing more abnormal cells. These cancers are often marked by enlarged lymph nodes, fever, and weight loss.
Non-Transient, Non-Community Water System (NTNC)	A water system which supplies water to 25 or more of the same people at least six months per year in places other than their residences. Some examples are schools, factories, office buildings, and hospitals which have their own water systems.
Organic water contaminants	Carbon-based chemicals, such as solvents and pesticides, which can get into water through runoff from cropland or discharge from factories.
Overlay	In epidemiology, placing a layer of information on top of another layer to see how they are related.
Ozone	A pollutant that occurs in two layers of the atmosphere. In the stratosphere, ozone protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet rays. At ground-level, ozone is an air pollutant that can be harmful to human health and the environment. It is the principal component of "smog" and is produced from the action of sunlight on air contaminants from combustion sources including automobile exhausts. Ozone levels are most likely to be elevated on hot, sunny afternoons.
Particle pollution	A complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids, such as nitrates and sulfates, organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles.
Particulate matter (2.5)	Fine particles or droplets in the air that are less than 2.5 microns wide, or about 30 times smaller than human hair. Outside, they come primarily from motor vehicle exhausts, power plants, wild fires, manufacturing processes, and the reaction of gases in the atmosphere. Indoor sources include tobacco smoke, cooking, fireplaces, and candles.
Pathogen	A disease-causing organism.
Perinatal mortality	A fetal death of 28 weeks gestation or more and an infant death in the first six days of life.

Pesticide poisoning	Damage or illness that results from inhaling, absorbing, touching, or swallowing a pesticide.
Pesticides	Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or controlling any pest: herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and various other substances.
Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCBs)	Chemicals made up of as many as 209 chlorinated compounds that do not occur naturally. They can either be oily liquids or waxy solids that are odorless and range from colorless to yellow in color. These chemicals were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including electrical, heat transfer, and hydraulic equipment; as plasticizers in paints, plastics, and rubber products; in pigments, dyes, and carbonless copy paper; and many other industrial applications. PCBs are toxic and have been banned for use in the U.S. since 1979.
Postneonatal mortality	A death which occurs between 28 days and a year of life.
Poverty percent or rate	The percentage of people or families who are below poverty (12%–15% below federal poverty line).
Preterm birth	Preterm birth is the birth of an infant at least three weeks before the due date (less than 37 weeks gestation). For Tracking, preterm births are measured among singleton births only.
Prevalence	The number of existing cases of an illness in a defined population at a given point or period in time.
Prevention	Proactive activities conducted to avoid health hazards and their consequences.
Primacy State	A State that has the responsibility and authority to administer EPA's drinking water regulations within its borders. The state must have rules at least as stringent as the EPA's.
Primary diagnosis code	The first diagnosis field(s) of the coded clinical record. Presently, the code is represented by an ICD-10-CM code (the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification).
Privacy	Health information privacy broadly refers to individuals' rights to control the acquisition, use, or disclosure of their identifiable health data.
Public health surveillance	The ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health data. This activity also involves timely dissemination of the data and use for public health programs.
Public notification	An advisory that EPA requires a water system to distribute to affected consumers when the system has violated MCLs or other regulations. The notice advises consumers what precautions, if any, they should take to protect their health.
Public Water System (PWS)	Any water system that provides water to at least 25 people for at least 60 days annually.
Race	The classification of humans into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of characteristics. The most commonly used categories are based on visible traits, such as skin color, facial features, hair texture, and self-identification.

Radionuclides	Any man-made or natural element that emits radiation and that may cause health problems, including cancer and birth defects, after many years of exposure through media such as drinking water and air.
Radon	A natural radioactive gas that you cannot see, smell, or taste, but is extremely toxic.
Rapid Inquiry Facility (RIF)	An automated mapping and analysis tool that provides an extension to ESRI® ArcGIS functions and uses both database and GIS technologies. The purpose of this facility is to rapidly address epidemiological and public health questions using routinely collected health and population data.
Rate	A measure of the frequency with which an event occurs in a defined population.
Raw water	Water in its natural state, prior to any treatment for drinking. See related term: Source water.
Registry	Information system for documenting people with a common characteristic, such as a particular health condition.
Remote sensing data	Data from sensing devices, such as satellites, aircrafts, and spacecraft.
Reproductive health	Health of the male and female reproductive and sexual organs. The term is also applied to issues relating to the reproductive process, such as fertility, and pregnancy outcomes like infant mortality and preterm delivery.
Research	A systematic investigation, including the design, implementation, testing, and evaluation to contribute to the scientific literature.
Resolution	Degree of detail that can be seen or shown.
Respiratory health	Relating to the health of the lungs and the other parts of the of the respiratory system that affect breathing
Risk	Potential or probability that an event will occur, such as danger or harm.
Risk factor	An aspect of personal behavior or lifestyle, an environmental exposure, or a genetic characteristic that affects a person's chance of getting a disease or other adverse health effect.
Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)	Originally passed by Congress in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water system, SDWA authorizes the EPA to set national, health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally-occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. EPA, states, and water systems then work together to make sure that these standards are met. http://www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa/index.html
Safe Drinking Water Information System/ Federal	Contains information about public water systems and their violations of EPA's drinking water regulations, as reported to EPA by states. It does not contain specific sampling or monitoring data.
Safe Drinking Water Information System/State	A system that helps states manage the information necessary to supervise public drinking water systems. It houses three major categories of information: inventory, sampling, and monitoring data.

Sanitary survey	An on-site review of the water sources, facilities, equipment, operation, and maintenance of public water systems for the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of the facilities for producing and distributing safe drinking water.
Secondary Drinking Water Standards	Non-enforceable federal guidelines regarding cosmetic effects, such as tooth or skin discoloration, or aesthetic effects, such as taste, odor, or color, of drinking water. These standards are recommended to water systems, but the systems are not required to comply. http://www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/index.html
Sex ratio	For Tracking this is the ratio of males to females at birth among term single births.
Smoke	Smoke is created when air combines with the airborne solid and liquid particulates and gases that are emitted when a material undergoes combustion.
Smoothing	The process of averaging a measure for an area based on information about that area and areas around it to keep personal identifiers confidential.
Soil	The top layer of the earth's surface, consisting of rock and mineral particles mixed with organic matter.
Sole-source aquifer	An aquifer that supplies 50 percent or more of the drinking water of an area.
Source water	Water in its natural state, prior to any treatment for drinking.
Spatial correlation	The measure of the tendency for places that are near each other to have similar or dissimilar characteristics.
Spatial relationship	The measure of the distance between two locations.
Spina Bifida (without Anencephaly)	The most common birth defect in the United States. It is a type of neural tube defect. The neural tube is a narrow channel that folds and closes during the third and fourth weeks of pregnancy to form the brain and spinal cord. Spina bifida happens if the portion of the neural tube that forms the spinal cord does not close completely during the first month of pregnancy. Read more about Spina bifida: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/SpinaBifida.htm
State Environmental Health Indicators Collaborative (SEHIC)	A group of state-level environmental health practitioners within the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, CSTE, developing indicators for use within environmental health surveillance and practice.
Surface water	Water on the surface of the earth, such as in lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, and springs.
Systemic Lupus Erythmatosis (SLE)	An autoimmune disease with a number of possible symptoms including rash, sensitivity to light, ulcers in the mouth, arthritis, pleuritis, pericarditis, kidney problems, seizures and psychosis, blood cell abnormalities. http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Lupus/default.asp
Temporal scale	Time period used for statistics.

Tetralogy of Fallot	A heart condition that is present at birth, and often is called a congenital heart defect. This defect changes the normal flow of blood through the heart. Tetralogy of Fallot is a combination of four defects: (1) a hole in the wall between the ventricles (two lower chambers of the heart), called a ventricular septal defect; (2) narrowing of the tube that carries blood from the heart to the lungs, called pulmonary stenosis; (3) the aorta (the tube that carries oxygen-rich blood to the body) grows from both ventricles, rather than from the left ventricle only; and (4) a thickened muscular wall of the right ventricle, called right ventricular hypertrophy. Read more about Tetralogy of Fallot: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/TetralogyOfFallot.htm
Thyroid cancer	Cancer that forms in the thyroid gland, a butterfly-shaped organ at the base of the throat that produces hormones that help control heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and weight. Four main types of thyroid cancer are papillary, follicular, medullary, and anaplastic thyroid cancer.
Time trend	Monitoring change over time.
Total Fertility rate	The number of births per 1,000 women of reproductive age.
Total trihalomethanes (TTHM)	TTHM is a sum of the concentration in milligrams per liter of the following disinfection byproducts: chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and dibromochloromethane.
Toxin	A substance that is harmful to the body or environment.
Traffic	The movement of vehicles, ships, persons, etc., in an area, along a street, through an air lane, over a water route, etc.
Transient, Non-Community Water System (TNC)	A water system which provides water in a place such as a gas station or campground where people do not remain for long periods of time. These systems do not have to test or treat their water for contaminants which pose long-term health risks because fewer than 25 people drink the water over a long period. They still must test their water for microbes and several chemicals.
Transposition of the Great Arteries (Vessels)	A heart condition that is present at birth and often is called a congenital heart defect. Transposition of the great arteries occurs when the two main arteries going out of the heart—the pulmonary artery and the aorta—are switched in position, or “transposed”. Read more about Transposition of the Great Arteries: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/TranspositionGreatArteries.htm
Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Tetrachloroethylene (PCE)	These are volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a colorless liquid which is used as a solvent for cleaning metal parts. Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) is a manufactured chemical used for dry cleaning and metal degreasing.
Turbidity	The cloudy appearance of water caused by the presence of tiny particles. High levels of turbidity may interfere with proper water treatment and monitoring.
Underground storage tanks (USTs)	Containers for the storage of petroleum or hazardous substances that can harm the environment and human health if the USTs release their stored contents.

United States Geological Survey (USGS)	A government science organization that focuses on biology, geography, geology, geospatial information, and water. The organization is dedicated to the timely, relevant, and impartial study of the landscape, natural resources, and natural hazards. http://www.usgs.gov/
Upper Limb Reduction Defects	Upper limb reduction defects occur when a part of or the entire arm (upper limb) of a fetus fails to form completely during pregnancy. The defect is referred to as a “limb reduction” because a limb is reduced from its normal size or is missing. Read more about Upper Limb Reduction Defects: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/UL-LimbReductionDefects.htm
US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	A scientific agency focused on the conditions of the oceans and the atmosphere. http://www.noaa.gov/
Vital statistics	Data derived from certificates and reports of birth, death, fetal death, induced termination of pregnancy, marriage, and related reports.
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	Organic compounds that easily become vapors or gases. Some are released from burning fuel, such as gasoline and coal. When released into the environment, these chemicals can cause damage to the soil and ground water and can contribute to air pollution.
Water distribution system	A network of pipes leading from a treatment plant to customers' plumbing systems.
Water sample	The water that is analyzed for the presence of EPA-regulated drinking water contaminants. Depending on the regulation, EPA requires water systems and states to take samples from source water, from water leaving the treatment facility, or from the taps of selected consumers.
Water well	A hole drilled or bored into the earth to get water.
Watershed	The land area from which water drains into a stream, river, or reservoir.
Wellhead protection area	The area surrounding a drinking water well or well field which is protected to prevent contamination of the well(s).