

Private Water Providers Deliver Higher Compliance and Safer Service



BACKGROUND:

Across decades of data and peer-reviewed research, privately owned water utilities consistently outperform public systems in meeting Safe Drinking Water Act standards. Studies show private utilities have fewer health-related violations, lower enforcement action rates, and maintain better operational performance—all while providing communities safe, reliable water service. These findings underscore the role of private water providers in ensuring safe drinking water for millions of Americans.

RESEARCH SHOWS:

- In a landmark study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Allaire et al. (2018) found that **private water systems are less likely to violate Safe Drinking Water Act Standards.**
- In the American Journal of Political Science, Konisky & Teodoro (2015) wrote: **“consistent evidence shows that publicly owned facilities are more likely than comparable privately owned facilities to violate regulatory requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act.”**
- According to U.S. EPA data, over the last five years, **American Water, the nation’s largest private water and wastewater service provider, is approximately 10 times better than the industry average for meeting health-based limits for drinking water.**



OUTCOMES:

Safer, more reliable water service

Compliance that protects public health

Superior operational performance

Private water providers deliver:

References

- Allaire, Maura; Wu, Haowei; and Lall, Upmanu. 2018. “National Trends in Drinking Water Quality Violations.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 115(10): 2078–2083. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1719805115>
- Konisky, David M., and Manuel P. Teodoro. 2015. “When Governments Regulate Governments: Political Foundations of the Regulatory State.” American Journal of Political Science 59(3): 559–574. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12221>