Priority Pollutant Encyclopedia Article

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Under the 1977 amendments to the **Clean Water Act**, the **Environmental Protection Agency** is required to compile a list of priority toxic pollutants and to establish toxic pollutant **effluent** standards. A list of 126 key water pollutants was produced by EPA in 1981, and is updated regularly, with the updates appearing in the *Code of Federal Regulations*. This list, consisting of metals and organic compounds and known as the Priority Toxic Pollutant list, also prescribes numerical **water quality standards** for each compound. State **water quality** programs must use these standards or develop their own standards of at least equal stringency.