

## Drinking water polluters to face heavy fines

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China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) has warned that any discharge of waste water containing highly toxic chemicals into drinking water sources will face heavy fines of up to 500,000 yuan.

The latest draft government regulation that was issued Thursday by SEPA, China's top environmental watchdog, on its official website is now open for public opinions before the end of this month.

The regulation stipulates that violations that involve direct discharge of toxic liquids into drinking water sources, dumping or burying underground near drinking water sources soluble poisonous chemical residues including mercury, cadmium, arsenic, chromium, cyanide and yellow phosphorus, and leakage of the toxic materials through wells, pits, crevices or caves, will face severe fines. The minimum fine will be no less than 50 thousand yuan.

The regulation also forbids the dumping of industrial residues, urban garbage and other wastes into water at drinking water sources.

The draft regulation vests those who suffer from damages or losses the legitimate rights to demand polluters eliminate the dangers and compensate for the losses. It says the government encourages the establishment of an ecological compensation mechanism at drinking water sources. The details for the compensation system will soon be worked out by several government ministries.

Meanwhile, concentrated drinking water sources will be labeled as first and second class protection areas, where definite boundaries must be marked with noticeable warning signs.

The regulation, according to an official from the environment supervision department of SEPA, will have to coordinate with the upcoming compensation system, which will help make the regulation a unified one. (Xinhua)

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