

# Improving the Water Quality on Airplanes

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By: Marina Hanes in Green News



Our surrounding environment is what sustains us, and you have to worry about environmental contaminants even when you're on an airplane. Currently the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has created the [National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Aircraft Public Water Systems](#), and the regulations in this publication will come into effect by October 2011. This just goes to show that even when you're thousands of feet above land, you still have to worry about the quality of your environment.

The main focus of the new regulations is to ensure that the portable water storage system, which is kept on board the plane, is pure enough for drinking. In order to carry out this regulation, carriers will have to do more coliform sampling to determine whether the water is free from harmful organisms. When you're flying into another country that doesn't have the best water quality, don't you want to know that you're at least drinking quality water while on the plane?

Instead of carriers having to keep a stock of [bottled water](#), which only adds weight to the aircraft and creates more waste, airlines can have a simple device installed. A company called International Water Guard (IWG) specializes in portable water systems and has an ultraviolet (UV) light device, which can be installed on a water tank. The UV light kills any harmful organisms in the water before someone drinks it or uses the water to wash his/her hands.

These new EPA regulations protect the public's health, but they also have the environment's interest at heart too. With fewer aircrafts hauling bottled water around, there will be less plastic waste, and the carrier will not have to use as much fuel to transport passengers and cargo. Bottled water on airplanes only adds weight and encourages wastefulness.

Although airlines' [drinking water quality](#) won't be improved until 2011, you can at least control parts of your surrounding environment while flying. A common reason for jet lag is stale air, and if you're not flying in first-class, your air supply is probably less than fresh. So ask the flight attendant to turn up the fresh air, and while you're at it, find out if they have a purification system for their portable water supply.