

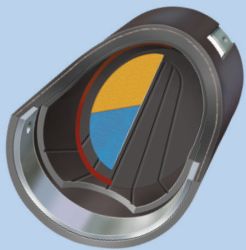
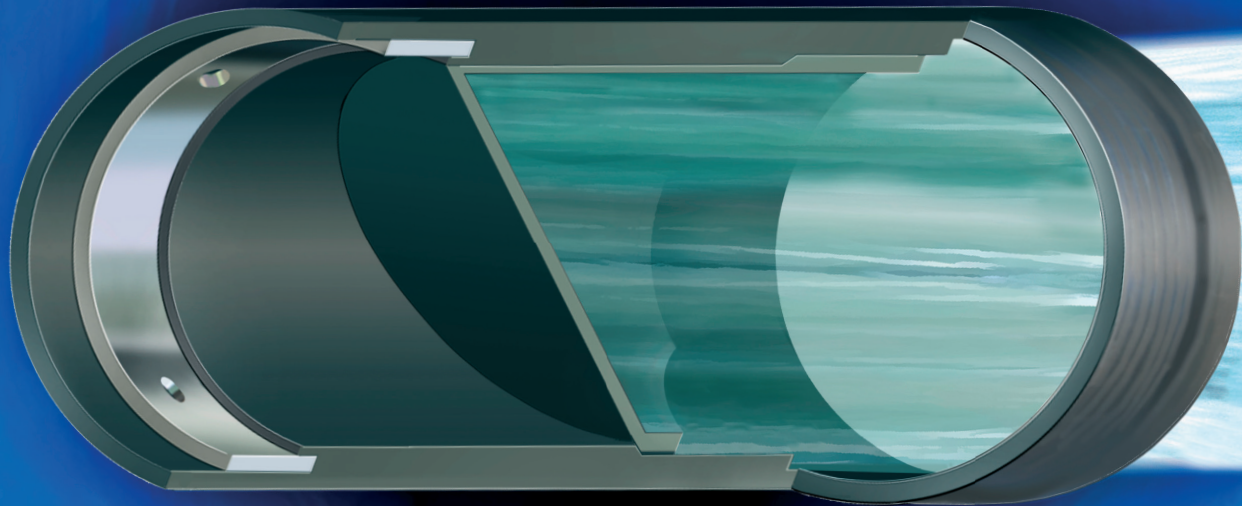
SPLASH SHOT

■ Don't panic – field workers with the U.S. Geological Survey routinely inject harmless dye into rivers to better understand streamflow conditions. By studying the dye as it moves between sampling points, scientists can gain insight into water travel speeds, routes, and dispersion rates. These are important metrics that aid hydrologists' understanding of water quality, its effect on marine life, and how contaminants in water might spread. U.S. Geological Survey



Red Valve®

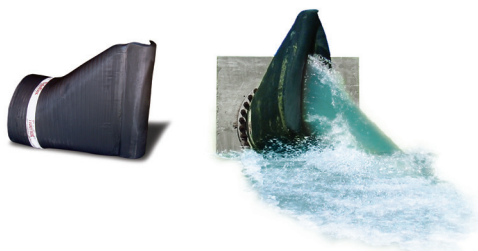
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Dye-tracer studies usually involve Rhodamine WT, a bright-red fluorescent dye classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as harmless to people, fish, plants, and boats at the concentration used by the U.S. Geological Survey. The agency has used this dye in its tracer studies for decades. Pat Braaten/U.S. Geological Survey





Last June, U.S. Geological Survey hydrologists undertook dye-tracer studies on the Mississippi River near Pleasant Valley, Iowa, and on the Yellowstone River near Glendive, Mont. Concentrations of the dye were measured at different distances from the application site using boat- or bank-mounted equipment to gauge the extent to which water is mixed as it travels downstream. U.S. Geological Survey