



Fact Sheet

Group A Public Water Supplies • Chapter 246-290 WAC

Water System Planning Rule Changes

September 2016

Background

Water systems that submit water system plans have been required to update their plans every six years. For many of these water systems, the health benefit may not justify the cost of this requirement. The goal is to streamline regulations, reduce costs, provide clarity, and improve consistency. The proposed rule increases flexibility for systems to develop the plan that best fits their needs and the needs of local planning agencies that may rely on water system plans to determine the availability and capacity of public water providers within their jurisdictions.

Water system plan approval period

The proposed rule extends the approval period for water system plans from six years to ten years with the option to choose a shorter timeframe. The forecasting requirements for key planning elements are extended to align with the new approval timeframe, including water demand forecasting, water resource analyses, capital improvement programs, and budgeting. Other planning elements, including water use efficiency programs, source water protection and watershed control programs are also changing to ten-year update cycles.

Water system plan submittals

The proposed rule removes the term, "expanding system" as a plan submittal trigger and replaces it with the following specific actions.

- Increase or modify the service area identified in an approved planning document; or
- Increase or modify the geographical area where service is currently provided if a planning document has not been previously approved; or
- Install additions, extensions, or changes to existing infrastructure AND requesting to increase the approved number of service connections.

The new submittal triggers allow systems to submit a project report instead of a plan if they are proposing to:

- Increase the approved number of connections within their service area without installing new facilities (e.g., using water use efficiency savings or other existing excess capacity); or
- Install replacement or redundant infrastructure without increasing the approved number of connections.

The proposed rule also adds a plan submittal requirement for systems that seek to receive or to continue receiving a department approval for an unspecified number of connections.

Other planning submittals

Water system plan amendments: The proposed rule adds a new section that clarifies conditions and options for submitting a plan amendment. The rule allows systems to amend their plan at any time during the current planning cycle and clarifies that an amendment does not alter the current plan approval date or the next date for the plan update.

Small Water System Management Programs: The proposed rule establishes that systems seeking existing system as-built approval must submit a Small Water System Management Program as part of their submittal package.

Service area requirements

The proposed rule makes the following "service area" changes.

- Eliminates "existing service area" definition and incorporates the concept into the "service area" definition.
- Revises "future service area" definition to apply only to systems located in Critical Water Supply Service Areas (CWSSA).
- Revises "service area" definition to require that systems located in CWSSA include their future service area as part of their service area.
- Expands the requirement for municipal water suppliers to demonstrate consistency with local plans and development regulations to the service area.
- Eliminates the requirement for municipal water suppliers to meet certain conditions before extending service outside the retail service area and into their approved service area or future service area.

For more information

Contact Theresa Phillips, 360-236-3147 or Theresa.phillips@doh.wa.gov.



If you need this publication in an alternative format, call 800.525.0127 (for TDD/TTY call 711). This and other publications are available at www.doh.wa.gov/drinkingwater.



Fact Sheet

Group A Public Water Supplies • Chapter 246-290 WAC

Emergency Sources and Supply

September 2016

Background

With ever increasing emergency events such as drought conditions, wildfires, and flooding, the proposed rule sets new requirements for water systems that have an emergency source of supply. It converts long-standing guidance into rules for trucking water in order to better protect public health and deliver safe drinking water to the water system's customers.

Emergency sources

The proposed rule contains requirements that apply to water systems that elect to maintain an emergency source. The rule requires documenting information in their emergency response program including source characteristics, engineering design approval, a water quality monitoring schedule, and procedures to activate the emergency source. Requirements include identifying the actions a water system must complete to have an emergency source either physically connected or physically disconnected to their distribution system when not in use.

Trucking water

The proposed rule establishes requirements for water systems that want to use trucked water as an emergency drinking water supply. The water must be from an approved Group A public water supply, be treated to maintain a chlorine residual, and stored in an approved delivery truck or component of the water system. Before trucking water, the purveyor must get permission from the Department of Health or local health officer and must maintain necessary records.

For more information

Contact Theresa Phillips, 360-236-3147 or Theresa.phillips@doh.wa.gov.



If you need this publication in an alternative format, call 800.525.0127 (for TDD/TTY call 711). This and other publications are available at www.doh.wa.gov/drinkingwater.



Disinfection

September 2016

Background

The Group A rule includes varying disinfection requirements that were previously adopted to address specific water quality issues or to align with federal rule requirements. Through the review of the rules, the department identified areas that could be improved, including:

- Revisions to clarify the triggers for continuous source disinfection.
- Revisions to monitoring and reporting requirements to provide flexibility.
- Sets new requirements for systems that desalinate seawater using reverse osmosis.
- Clarifies the criteria for treatment techniques and reporting violations.

Source water—continuous disinfection

The current rule requires water systems to add disinfection for sources in hydraulic connection to surface water, a history of unsatisfactory source coliform sampling, or a microbial contaminant threat within the sanitary control area. The current rule does not address microbial risks to source water quality caused by specific issues related to the source itself. The proposed rule clarifies what types of conditions may pose a threat to the source. When a susceptibility assessment, sanitary survey, or special purpose investigation reveals a source is at risk of microbial contamination, the water system must provide continuous disinfection. Risks include, but are not limited to:

- A poorly constructed source.
- An inadequate surface seal.
- High groundwater.
- Lack of confining layers in the aquifer.
- A Shallow source.
- A drilled well in fractured bedrock.
- A source at risk of flooding.

Desalination of seawater water by reverse osmosis

The proposed rule establishes a new disinfection requirement for water systems that desalinate seawater with Reverse Osmosis (RO). Studies show that RO cannot guarantee adequate removal of viruses. The proposed rule requires continuous disinfection that meets a Concentration Time equal to six, or CT6, which will adequately inactivate viruses for seawater sources that are treated using RO. This improvement will better protect against outbreaks of illnesses caused by water-borne viruses.

Monitoring

The proposed rule changes the frequency of monitoring disinfectant concentration at the point of entry to the distribution system to "at least once per day, five days per week or each day that water is supplied by the treatment plant if it operates less than daily." The current requirement specifies "at least every Monday through Friday (except holidays) that water is supplied." This change allows systems more flexibility of when to monitor, but keeps the requirement for five days a week and recognizes that some treatment plants do not operate daily.

The proposed rule requires systems to use an Environmental Protection Agency-approved method, such as a digital colorimeter, to measure free chlorine residual and disallows the use of test strips because they are not considered accurate enough to determine compliance. The rule also adds an allowance to use color wheels for distribution residual measurements, but the color wheel remains unapproved to measure residuals for source treatment.

The proposed rule adds a definition for "detectable residual disinfectant concentration" to mean 0.2 mg/L of free chlorine, total chlorine, or combined chlorine and removes the option for groundwater systems to use the Heterotrophic Plate Count method. The proposed rule requires systems to maintain a detectable residual disinfectant concentration (as defined) in all active parts of the distribution system unless the department approves a written request to use a lower value. The request must identify the instrument used to measure chlorine residual and include the manufacturer's documentation of the accuracy to measure the lower value.

For More Information

Contact Theresa Phillips, 360-236-3147 or Theresa.phillips@doh.wa.gov.



If you need this publication in an alternative format, call 800.525.0127 (for TDD/TTY call 711). This and other publications are available at www.doh.wa.gov/drinkingwater.

	Detectable Residual -451(7)	CT6 -451(6)	Ground Water Rule, 4-log -453	Purchased Surface Water
Monitoring Requirement	5 days/week in distribution * can be reduced if approved	5 days/week at entry point to distribution	Daily 7 days/week at entry point to distribution	Daily 7 days/week in distribution
Equipment	Color Wheel okay	Digital Colorimeter	Digital Colorimeter	Digital Colorimeter
Treatment Requirement	0.2 mg/L residual minimum * can be reduced if approved	Source specific	Source specific	0.2 mg/L residual minimum * can be reduced if approved