

A high-speed photograph of water splashing, with a stream of water falling from the top right and creating a large splash with many bubbles in the center. The background is a light blue gradient with a pattern of small, faint water droplets.

*W*ATER ACT Regulations

Q&A for Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment System Regulations

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Communities, Land
and Environment

Questions and Answers for the Water Supply System and Wastewater Treatment System Regulations

Q1 Who do these regulations effect?

A1 Directly they affect the persons owning, and / or responsible for operating

- Municipal or privately owned central water or wastewater systems serving residential customers such as those found in many cities, towns and smaller communities around the province and facilities such as campgrounds or cottage rental locations.
- Industrial wastewater treatment systems
- Individuals employed as operators of water supply or wastewater treatment systems.

Indirectly they affect:

- Customers of central water supply and wastewater treatment systems, in relation to the accountability and reliability required of system operators
- Stakeholders with an interest in the impact of wastewater discharges to surface water resources.

Q2 I have my own well and septic system....do these regulations apply to me?

A2 No, these regulations do not apply to individual septic systems or individual wells.

- The construction and operation of septic systems which will be continue to be regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act*, Sewage Disposal Systems Regulations.
- The construction of water wells will be regulated under amended Well Construction Regulations.
- The withdrawal of water from wells at rates exceeding 25 cubic metres per day will be controlled by new Water Withdrawal Regulations, both of which will be under the new *Water Act*.

Q3 Under these new regulations will I still need to get an approval to construct, modify or operate a water supply or wastewater treatment system?

A3 Yes, however there are some significant changes in the processes and nature of these approvals.

- Under the new regulations, a permit will be required to construct or modify a water supply or wastewater treatment system, rather than the Certificates of Approval (COA's) issued under the Section 13 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.
- Under some circumstances utilities with sufficient professional capacity will be permitted to undertake a limited number of construction activities without an approval.
- Under these regulations a licence will be required to operate a water supply system or wastewater treatment system, rather than the Certificates of Approval (COA's) currently issued under the Section 16 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.to operate a water supply system.

Q4 Will these regulations change the standards that water and wastewater system owners need to comply with?

A4 No, in general the amended regulations maintain more or less the same standards as before, however some standards which were formally included as conditions in individual approvals will now be specified in regulation.

However, these regulations do provide a clear definition for primary and secondary disinfection for water supply systems, definitions as follows: Primary Disinfection refers to the level of treatment prior to the first customer on a water distribution system, whereas secondary disinfection refers to the level of chlorine in the distribution system.

Q5 I own a municipal water supply system. What treatment levels will be required?

A5 The regulations require municipal water supply systems to achieve a 4 log (99.99 %) reduction of viruses for primary disinfection, the industry standard. This is typically achieved by injection chlorine at the well heads and allowing the chlorine enough contact time prior to water being delivered to the first customer.

Q6 If I own a Very Small or Small Water Distribution system, are there water treatment standards that I must meet.

A6 Yes, owners of Very Small or Small Water Distribution system will be required to meet primary disinfection requirements. These regulations require these systems to either have chlorine disinfection in place of a properly sized and selected UV light.

Q7 What are most Very Small or Small Water Distribution systems using for disinfection?

A7 Typically, owners of Very Small or Small Water Distribution system use an Ultra-violet light disinfection device for primary treatment. These lights need to be properly sized and be NSF certified.

Q8 What if my system does not have an Ultra-violet light or the light does not meet this standard.

A8 The department will be asking the owner of systems to develop a plan including timelines and steps to be taken to meet disinfection requirements.

Q9 How do the standards for drinking water quality compare with other jurisdictions?

A10 The regulations do not contain drinking water guidelines made specifically for PEI, but reference the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, published by Health Canada as the basis for drinking water quality assessments.

Q11 How do the provincial standards for wastewater quality compare with federal standards under the *Fisheries Act*, Wastewater System Effluent Regulations (WSER)?

A11 The standards for wastewater quality are the same as the federal standards, except unlike the WSER, the new regulations also address bacteria levels in wastewater

Q12 Do water or wastewater systems need to report to government when they are out of compliance?

A12 Yes, in the case of adverse drinking water quality results, wastewater quality results or unintended effluent discharges, or any significant event that may put public health or the environment at risk, utilities are required to notify the appropriate regulatory authorities.

Q13 As a Certified Operator, will I have to meet any new requirements?

A13 No, generally, the requirements for operator certification are similar to what they are in the current regulations. Currently, the province uses the Canadian Best Practices for guidance on issuing operator certificates. The new regulations will place these requirements in a more formal regulatory format. However, there are new requirements for operators holding a Small Water Distribution certificate to renew their licence every 4 years. In order to renew the licence, they will be required to complete an approved training course during the valid period of their license, and they will also be required to pay a small renewal fee.

Q14 Are there going to be additional inspections of systems required?

A14 Yes, owners of municipal systems are going to have to hire consulting engineers to complete inspections of their systems every 5 years. The inspections will include a review of their last five years of their water or wastewater quality, the condition of system infrastructure, etc.

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