
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

DWGB-12-4

2021

Chemical Monitoring Waivers

The Chemical Monitoring Waiver Program can save public water systems (PWSs) up to several hundred dollars per sampling location annually in required sampling costs. Community and non-transient non-community water systems are required under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act to test annually for both volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and synthetic organic compounds (SOCs). PWSs will sample less often for VOCs and SOCs if they obtain waivers. Waivers are granted based on source protection criteria. There is no cost to apply, the application process is not difficult, and help is available.

To be eligible for waivers, a public water supply must put into effect a four-step source protection program.

- 1. Delineate the area to be protected.** This is done by NHDES or as part of the new source approval process. For groundwater sources, the area to be protected is called a wellhead protection area. The wellhead protection area is the land area from which groundwater may flow to the well. If you have a bedrock well, your wellhead protection area may simply be a circle drawn around the well with the size of the circle dependent upon the maximum daily volume withdrawn from the well. For non-bedrock or overburden wells, existing hydrogeologic information may be used to delineate the wellhead protection area. The wellhead protection area for new bedrock and overburden wells may be more accurately delineated on a current hydrogeologic assessment approved by NHDES. For surface water sources, the protection area consists of the portion of the watershed within 4,000 feet upgradient of the intake. NHDES provides a map to all waiver applicants that will show the protection area(s) for your source(s).
- 2. Inventory potential contamination sources (PCSs).** PCSs are facilities that use or handle greater than household quantities of regulated substances (see a list of common PCSs on the next page). To apply for a waiver, you must list or update all PCSs within the source protection area. The map provided by NHDES will assist you with this task.
- 3. List land usage in the sanitary protective area.** The sanitary protective area is the land immediately around a well. It ranges from 75 feet to 400 feet depending upon the type of water system and the maximum daily volume taken from the well. Land usage in the sanitary protective area is critical to a well's protection due to its proximity. This step does not apply to surface sources.
- 4. Manage PCSs** and other activities that may contribute to contamination of groundwater in your protection area. Management activities required for the waiver program depend on the size of the PWS and the type of PCSs. All waiver recipients must educate (by means of informational flyers and form letters) residents and businesses within the source protection area. Large public water systems must also develop a program to visit and inspect all PCSs at least once every three years. Large systems with a significant number of PCSs must obtain legal authority to enforce state rule Env-Wq

401, Best Management Practices for Groundwater Protection, which applies to the storage and handling of regulated substances by PCSs.

How the Waiver Process Works

- The public water system contacts NHDES at (603) 271-2862 to request a system-specific application.
- A water system must submit to NHDES for review a complete and accurate waiver application and be in compliance with Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau rules to be eligible for the waiver.
- If a VOC waiver is granted, required VOC sampling is reduced from annually to as little as once every three years, depending on land uses in the vicinity of the source.
- If a SOC waiver is granted, required SOC sampling is reduced from annually to as little as once every six years. The length of the SOC waiver is either three or six years depending on land uses around the source.
- An educational mailing must be conducted within 30 days of the waiver approval.
- All waivers must be renewed every three years, regardless of waiver duration.

Partial List of PCS under RSA 485-C:7 that Need to be Inventoried¹

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Vehicle service and repair shops. | • Cleaning services: dry cleaners, laundromats, beauty salons. |
| • General service and repair shops. | • Food processing plants. |
| • Manufacturing facilities. | • Hazardous waste facilities. |
| • Waste and scrap processing and storage. | • Medical, dental, veterinary offices. |
| • Petroleum and chemical storage tanks. | • Concrete, asphalt, tar plants. |
| • Laboratories. | • Metalworking shops. |
| • Fueling and maintenance of earthmoving equipment. | • Large salt storage facilities. |
| | • Chemical application areas: golf courses, athletic fields, railroads. |

For More Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at [\(603\) 271-2862](tel:6032712862) or chemwaivers@des.nh.gov, or visit our [Chemical Monitoring Waiver](#) webpage for more information.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of March 2021. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.

¹ While the list includes common PCSs to inventory, a PCS is broadly defined under RSA 485-C as an activity or operation that poses a reasonable risk that regulated contaminants may be introduced into the environment in such quantities as to degrade the natural groundwater quality.