
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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

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Operational Responsibilities of Community Public Water Systems

Managing and operating a community public water system (CWS) is a significant undertaking. This document provides an overview of managing a small CWS. A CWS is a system that serves at least 25 residents year-round. Examples of a CWS include municipal water systems, mobile home parks, condominiums and single-family housing developments.

As the water system's owner, it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that all state and federal requirements are implemented regardless of whether you occupy the facility or lease/rent it to other parties. The following sections summarize some of the responsibilities of the water system owner. The requirements are in New Hampshire Drinking Water Rules, Env-Dw 100-1000, et seq. All rules are available by visiting our website at des.nh.gov.

Water quality monitoring is an important aspect of ensuring that the system is supplying safe drinking water to consumers. Routinely check your sampling schedule to ensure that your monitoring is up to date. Sampling schedules and all analysis request forms are available on the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) [OneStop website](#).

Bacteria Monitoring – Disease organisms in a single glass of water can cause illness, thus water quality testing for bacteria is done frequently. The number of samples taken is based on the population and configuration of the system. More information is available in Admin. Rule Env-Dw 709.

Groundwater Rule Investigative Monitoring (GWR-IM) and Triggered Monitoring (GWR-TM) – Groundwater sources are subject to contamination from many areas. Investigative Monitoring and Triggered Monitoring are used for the protection of public health from groundwater contamination through source monitoring, treatment and treatment monitoring, per Env-Dw 717. More information concerning this rule is available in Admin. Rule Env-Dw 717.

Lead and Copper – Lead contamination is a major concern today, especially when ingestion by small children is involved. Sampling under this rule reflects this concern. The number of samples required is based on the system's population. More information on the lead and copper requirements is available in Admin. Rule Env-Dw 714.

Chemical Monitoring – Water quality testing for chemical parameters is less frequent, although equally as important. Generally, parameters in this group can pose a risk to health with exposure over a long period of time. The chemical monitoring groups include: Nitrate and Nitrite; inorganic compounds (IOCs, including metals); volatile organic compounds (VOCs, such as solvents & hydrocarbons); synthetic organic compounds

(SOCs, such as pesticides); and radiologicals (RADs, such as uranium & radium). Federal and state regulations require all CWSs to participate in a chemical monitoring program set forth in three-year compliance periods. More information concerning contaminant monitoring is available in Admin. Rules Env-Dw 709-713.

Chemical Monitoring Waivers – CWSs are eligible to apply for chemical monitoring waivers. By obtaining waivers and implementing measures to help protect your drinking water source(s) from contamination, you can save costs by reducing the frequency of testing for VOCs and SOCs. **A water system must be in compliance with the NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau (DWGB) rules to participate.** The application process is not difficult, it is free to apply and help is available. More information about the program is available in Fact Sheet DWGB-12-4, “Chemical Monitoring Waivers” and in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 712.

Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs) – Water systems that apply a chemical disinfectant such as chlorine, chloramines or ozone are required to monitor for disinfection byproducts and disinfectant residuals, in accordance with the type of disinfectant. Your monitoring frequency and number of samples depend on the levels detected, service population and source water origin (surface or groundwater). More information is available in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 715.

General System Evaluation Form – There is often a need for, and NHDES encourages, the collection of samples that are located before or midway through treatment, or at locations other than your regularly established compliance sites. Additional sample forms are located at the end of your system’s Master Sampling Schedule available on the NHDES [OneStop website](#).

Laboratory Services – NH Administrative Rule Env-Dw 719 requires owners of public water systems, who have samples analyzed by a commercial laboratory, to enter into a written agreement with an accredited lab to have their samples analyzed according to the proper methods and reported to this office within two business days. In the event that an acute contaminant is detected, they are required to notify us within 24 hours. For a list of the accredited laboratories, refer to the document developed by the NHELAP titled “Accredited Labs Providing Well Water Quality Testing Services in New Hampshire and Neighboring States.” If you use the State Laboratory, contact them by phone at (603) 271-3445.

Permit to Operate – Privately and federally owned CWSs are required to pay an annual Permit to Operate Fee (PTO). The cost is structured on \$10 per household or household equivalent with a maximum fee of \$300. The fee period follows the state's fiscal calendar year from July 1 to June 30. **The fee and signed application are due by June 30 of each year.** The application and permit are available on the NHDES [OneStop website](#).

Field Inspections – The DWGB staff inspects all CWSs every three years. There is no charge for this inspection.

Operator Certification - All CWSs are required to designate a New Hampshire-certified water system operator to be responsible for and oversee the operation and maintenance of the public water system. To meet this requirement, the owner may do one of the following: hire a New Hampshire-certified operator, become a certified operator by passing the certification examination or have an individual associated with the water system become certified. More information concerning operator certification and operator responsibilities is available in Fact Sheet DWGB-10-1, “Overview of Water System Operator Certification Program” and in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 502.

Design Approval or Changes to Existing Systems – **Design review approval is required for all modifications or expansions to the water system.** This includes adding new wells, treatment, storage, pumping or distribution upgrades. More information is available in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 405.

Emergency Plans – All CWSs are required to have and maintain an emergency plan. This plan must be submitted to NHDES every six years in March. It further requires that the plan be **reviewed annually** by the

system and updated as needed. Additionally, the plan is a checklist item during each sanitary survey and the lack of one will be a survey deficiency. Guidance documents and other emergency planning information is available in Fact Sheet DWGB-18-3, "Emergency Planning for Public Water Systems" and in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 503.21.

Consumer Confidence Report – All CWSs are required to produce a **yearly** Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR informs water customers about specific water quality parameters of their drinking water, the source of their water and the status of source water protection for the area impacting their water system. For this reason, it is important to maintain all laboratory water quality reports pertaining to your public water system. The CCR must be completed and distributed to your customers and to this office by **July 1 of each year**. Further information and a sample certification form are available on our website and in NH Admin. Rule Env-Dw 800.

Administrative Record Keeping System – Documentation relative to the systems' sampling requirements (sites and schedules), **all water quality information (laboratory reports)**, compliance information, any improvements and expansions must be maintained. ***It is imperative that the owner notify this office in writing of all changes affecting the water system.*** Specific record retention timeframes are specified in Fact Sheet DWGB-7-1, "Water System Records Retention."

Water System Compliance – As stated above, it is the water system owner's responsibility to ensure that all state and federal requirements are implemented. DWGB staff is available to answer questions. The majority of correspondence from our office includes a staff member's name and contact information. If you have questions regarding your responsibilities, please contact our office. It is important that you respond to letters and outreach from us to avoid enforcement actions; including Administrative Orders and Administrative Fines.

Finances – Running a water system is very much like running a business. It is important the system have a budget that accurately reflects all of the system's expenses including anticipated capital expenditures. The system must also have a rate structure that covers these expenses. The budget and rate plan should be reviewed annually. For assistance in developing a budget and rate plan, please contact the Small Public Water Supply Help Center at (603) 271-2513, via email at dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or use the templates and guidances on our website.

For More Information

Please contact the DWGB at (603) 271-2513 or dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or visit our website at des.nh.gov.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of July 2019. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.