
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Operational Responsibilities of Community Public Water Systems

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

It is ultimately the responsibility of the water system's owner to ensure that the water system meets all of the requirements. This is true even if the property served by the water system is leased or rented to another party.

The following summarizes some of the responsibilities of the water system owner.

Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring is the single most important aspect of ensuring that the system is supplying safe water to consumers. Routinely check your sampling schedule to ensure that your monitoring is up to date.

Bacterial Monitoring

Monitoring for bacteria in the water system is done frequently. A few disease-causing organisms in a single glass of water can cause illness. A community water system typically samples monthly for bacteria. The number of samples required each month is based on the population served and the system configuration.

Chemical Monitoring

Water quality testing for chemical contaminants is much less frequent than it is for bacteria. Long term exposure to these contaminants is usually necessary to pose a health risk. Chemical categories sampled include inorganic compounds (IOCs, which include metals), volatile organic compounds (VOCs, which include solvents and hydrocarbons), synthetic organic compounds (SOCs, which include pesticides), radiologicals (RADs), nitrate and nitrite. Each of these categories has its own sampling frequency (see the table on page 2). Systems are eligible to apply for sampling waivers for VOCs and SOCs. If granted, a waiver reduces the frequency of required testing and can save your water system a significant amount of sampling expense. The waivers are granted based on water quality, source protection criteria, and compliance with all pertinent DWGB rules. More information regarding [Chemical Monitoring Waivers](#) can be found online.

Lead and Copper Monitoring

Lead contamination is a major concern because it can cause delays in the physical or mental development of infants and children. Exposure to high levels of copper can cause gastrointestinal distress, and liver or kidney damage. The required number of lead and copper samples is based on the system's population. Systems that do not exceed the action levels, 0.015 mg/L for lead and 1.3 mg/L for copper, sample each site twice the first year, once a year for the next three years, and then once every three years. Systems exceeding these levels must do corrosion control studies, possibly provide treatment and perform additional sampling.

General Small Community Public Water System's Sampling Requirements **	
Test	Sampling Schedules
Bacteria	Monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually
Lead	Semi-annually, annually, or every three years
Copper	Semi-annually, annually, or every three years
Nitrates	Annually (2)
Nitrites	Every three years
IOC (Inorganic Compounds)	Surface water sources - annually Groundwater sources - every three years
SOC (Synthetic Organic Compounds)	Annually (4)
VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds)	Annually (1,3)
Uranium Mass	(1,5)
Combined Radium	(1,5)
Compliance Gross Alpha	(1,5)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All new systems – quarterly for first year. 2. Surface Water Sources – quarterly for first year 3. With Chemical Monitoring Sampling Waiver – every three years. 4. With Chemical Monitoring Sampling Waiver – every three or six years 5. Schedule based on initial monitoring. <p>Be sure to use NH accredited laboratories for all compliance sampling**</p>	

**A list of accredited laboratories offering drinking water testing services can be found at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/nhelap/index.htm>.

Certified Operator

All community water systems are required to have a New Hampshire certified operator who is responsible for all of the operational aspects of the water system. To meet this requirement the owner can hire a New Hampshire certified operator, become a certified operator him/herself, or have an individual associated with the water system become certified. Annual training is provided to assist water system personnel in obtaining certification. For more information on Drinking Water Operator Certification, read fact sheet [WD-DWGB-10-1](#).

Sanitary Surveys

A DES inspector visits all community water systems every three years. The inspector inspects all aspects of the system. The system's primary certified operator is required to be present for these inspections.

Design Approval of Changes to an Existing System

Design review approval is needed for all changes to a public water system. This includes, but is not limited to, expansion of the system to new customers, adding or changing treatment equipment or chemicals and adding new wells

Consumer Confidence Reports

Community water systems are required to produce an annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR informs water customers about the quality of their drinking water, the source(s), the status of source water protection efforts for the area impacting the water they use, and where customers can obtain additional information about drinking water issues related to their water system. The CCR must include the most recent water quality data from the previous calendar year.

The CCR must be completed and distributed to the system's customers and DES by July 1 of each year. The system then must submit a letter to DES within 10 days of distribution certifying that the system has distributed the CCR and that the information included was correct and consistent with compliance monitoring data previously submitted to DES. For more information, including a template for developing a CCR and a sample certification form, please visit our [CCR website](#).

Permit to Operate

Community water systems are required to pay an annual "Permit to Operate" fee. The annual fee is based on household equivalents or 2.5 people per service connection. The cost is structured on \$10 per service connection with a maximum fee of \$300. The Permit to Operate certificate runs from July 1 to June 30.

Emergency Plans

Community systems are required to have and maintain an emergency plan. An emergency plan helps establish a protocol for the management and staff of a water system to follow in case of an emergency and helps a water system reduce its vulnerability to emergencies. Plans must be submitted to DES every six years beginning in 2003. Additionally, plans are to be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Administrative Requirements

It is important for the owner to notify DES of address changes and other significant changes affecting the water system. Also, documentation of the system's sampling requirements (sites and schedules), water quality information, compliance information and improvements and expansions must be maintained. Detailed recordkeeping requirements can be found by reading the fact sheet WD-DWGB-7-1, "[Water System Records Retention](#)."

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 or dwginfo@des.nh.gov, or visit the [Capacity Assistance website](#).

Additional Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or dwginfo@des.nh.gov, or visit [us online](#). The bureau's [fact sheets](#) are available online. Additional public water information is also available at the [DES One Stop Data Retrieval Site](#).

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of June 2011. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.