

Drinking Water Regulatory System Overview

Potable Water Regulation Updates Engagement

Background

One of the main goals of the [Water for Life](#) strategy, established by the Government of Alberta in 2003, is a commitment to ensuring safe, secure drinking water. Waterworks systems are regulated via a drinking water regulatory system that operates under legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines. Alberta's drinking water regulatory system is further made up of many teams across both Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and Alberta Health, including AEP approvals, compliance, operator certification, drinking water operations specialists (DWOS), and policy teams. AEP regulates over seven hundred waterworks systems in Alberta.

Legislation and Regulations

Municipal drinking water systems in Alberta fall under the [Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act](#) (EPEA) which includes the following relevant regulations:

- [Potable Water Regulation](#) (PWR)
 - The PWR applies to all waterworks in Alberta and provides rules, provisions, prohibitions and stipulations related to water treatment requirements, potable water quality, water system design, performance standards, and certification of operators.
- [Environmental Protection and Enhancement \(Miscellaneous\) Regulation](#)
 - This regulation describes the publication of notices, detailing of regulatory offences, codes of practice, and describes the duration of certificates of qualification and approvals under the EPEA.
- [Activities Designation Regulation](#) (ADR)
 - The ADR identifies activities affecting the environment for which an approval, registration, or notifications are required.
- [Approvals and Registrations Procedure Regulation](#)
 - This regulation provides rules, provisions and stipulations regarding information that must be submitted with an application for an approval or registration.

In addition to EPEA, drinking water systems are regulated under the [Public Health Act](#). Alberta Health is responsible for the oversight of systems in relation to this Act and the following regulation:

- [Nuisance and General Sanitation Regulation](#)
 - This regulation requires that water that is accessible to the public, which may be used as drinking water, be potable.

Policy

The Water for Life strategy outlines the Government of Alberta's commitments to manage and safeguard Alberta's water resources. The government's objective is to develop comprehensive and scientifically defensible policy, standards and guidelines that are protective of human and environmental health, effective, reliable, and achievable without adding unnecessary red tape.

Standards & Guidelines

- [Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality](#)
 - These are drinking water quality guidelines that are used to regulate waterworks in Alberta. They are published by Health Canada and are referenced in AEP Standards and authorizations.
- [Standards and Guidelines for Municipal Waterworks, Wastewater and Storm Drainage Systems](#)
 - The standards and guidelines for municipal waterworks outline the minimum treatment and operational requirements for municipal waterworks systems that are regulated by AEP.
- Draft Standards for Micro Waterworks Systems
 - These draft standards would outline the minimum treatment and operational requirements for micro waterworks systems that are regulated by AEP.
- [Water and Wastewater Operators' Certification Guidelines](#)
 - These guidelines outline the Certificate of Qualification requirements for operators of waterworks and wastewater systems as per the EPEA.



Authorizations

Waterworks systems are issued either an approval or registration depending on the type of activity as outlined in the Activities Designation Regulation. Systems that receive a registration are regulated through Codes of Practice as outlined in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement (Miscellaneous) Regulation. Systems that receive an approval are subject to more site-specific requirements.

Compliance

Risk based audits and inspections are conducted on waterworks systems regulated by AEP. Audits and inspections pass or fail based on administrative, operational, and health risks. When individuals, companies, or municipalities fail to comply with our legislation, the department has enforcement tools under EPEA to ensure compliance.

Certification

The Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program was developed to ensure proper operation and maintenance of water and wastewater facilities, and to protect the health of citizens and the environment. The Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee is responsible for providing review and recommendations concerning the AEP Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program.

Drinking Water Operations Specialists (DWOS)

The provincial DWOS team provides technical assistance and education to inform the design and operations of waterworks systems regulated by AEP. They also work closely with regional health authorities, municipalities, and consultants during emergency situations involving drinking water supplies.

Where can I learn more?

Quick Links

Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

<https://www.alberta.ca/water-wastewater-operator-certification.aspx>

AEP Drinking Water Overview

<https://www.alberta.ca/drinking-water-overview.aspx>

For more information contact:

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