

Safe Drinking Water

Manitoba Acts and Regulations

What law covers the safety of drinking water?

The Drinking Water Safety Act (2002) outlines the steps that people who supply drinking water to the public (water suppliers) must take to ensure that water is safe to drink. Manitoba Water Stewardship's Office of Drinking Water enforces *The Drinking Water Safety Act*. The provincial act states that all suppliers must:

- be licensed by the Office of Drinking Water
- follow water quality monitoring procedures and record keeping requirements
- report regularly on their test results and make that information available to the public
- get approval from the Office of Drinking Water for new construction and changes to their treatment processes

What regulations apply to water quality?

The Drinking Water Quality Standards Regulation (2007) sets legally enforceable standards based on the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. The guidelines are set by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee on Drinking Water chaired by Health Canada. The provincial regulation covers the management of microbial, chemical and physical water quality and allows suppliers a phase in period, until March 1, 2012, to meet the new standards.

What happens before the compliance deadline?

During the phase-in period, water suppliers who do not meet the new quality standards must provide the Office of Drinking Water with a compliance plan describing how they will meet the standards by the March 1, 2012 deadline.

Water suppliers must have their water system infrastructure assessed by a qualified person.

Assessments include:

- a description of raw (source) water quality and treated water quality
- a description of the water system and its operation
- an assessment of the physical condition of the water system infrastructure
- an assessment of the potential for contamination of the water supply

These assessments help water suppliers:

- identify the steps needed to improve their water systems
- budget for major upgrades
- set appropriate water rates
- justify requests for financial assistance
- develop more detailed compliance plans

How does the Office of Drinking Water monitor suppliers?

The supplier's operating licence outlines the water testing requirements and water quality standards that apply to their system.

In the first quarter of each year (January to March), the local drinking water officer sends each supplier a report on how well they met the water testing requirements and water quality standards in the previous year. Suppliers must make these reports available to the public on request.

Suppliers who serve more than 1,000 people must provide an annual report on their operations to the Office of Drinking Water before March 31 each year, and must post that report on the Internet. These annual reports must have details about the water system, water quality test results, major expenses, any problems meeting regulations and actions taken to fix those problems.

Do operators have to be certified to run a water supply system?

Water treatment plant operators are regulated by Manitoba Conservation under *The Environment Act* (1987). The Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Regulation (2003) sets the standards for classification of water treatment and distribution systems, and certification of operators. Manitoba Water Stewardship's Office of Drinking Water works with Manitoba Conservation to classify the facilities and develop training programs to help ensure operators are qualified to manage the systems they are responsible for.

What is the province's source-to-tap approach to water quality?

Manitoba Water Stewardship also helps to protect drinking water at its source using *The Water Protection Act* (2005). Under this act, watershed management strategies are developed with prioritized actions to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems. Together, *The Water Protection Act* and *The Drinking Water Safety Act*, provide a framework for protecting water systems from the source, through the treatment and distribution system to the consumer's tap.

Where can I get more information?

For a copy of the Drinking Water Quality Standards Regulation or information on Manitoba's drinking water program, contact Manitoba Water Stewardship's Office of Drinking Water at 204-945-5762, or refer to the website at www.manitoba.ca/drinkingwater to find a local office near you.

For a copy of the Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Regulation or information on operator certification, contact Manitoba Conservation at 204-945-7065, or refer to the website at www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eal/certification/index.html