



Questions & Answers

Water Use Efficiency Rule

Why was the Water Use Efficiency Rule passed?

In 2003 the State Legislature passed the Municipal Water Law, which directed the Department of Health (DOH) to adopt a rule that establishes water use efficiency (WUE) requirements for all municipal water suppliers. The water use efficiency rule will help conserve water for the environment and future generations. It will also enhance public health by improving water system efficiency and reliability.

Is my water system affected by this rule?

All municipal water suppliers are affected by the rule requirements; this includes most Group A community water systems with 15 or more residential connections and some non-community water systems that serve water in a residential manner. The Department of Ecology can help you figure out whether these rules apply to your water system. See Ecology contacts below or view Ecology's policy on municipal water suppliers at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/rules/images/pdf/pol2030.pdf

Central Regional Office (Yakima):	Scott Turner	(509) 457-7106
Eastern Regional Office (Spokane):	Dan Tolleson	(509) 329-3526
Northwest Regional Office (Bellevue):	Paul Fabiniak	(425) 649-4342
Southwest Regional Office (Lacey):	Phil Crane	(360) 407-0238

What do we need to do, and by when?

The rule requirements and compliance deadlines are shown in the table below. The requirements are listed in order, by the date they are due.

Rule Requirement	Deadline for water systems under 1,000 connections	Deadline for water systems w/ 1,000 or more connections
Install production meter(s)	January 22, 2007	January 22, 2007
Collect consumption & production data	January 1, 2008	Now
Include WUE program in planning documents	January 22, 2008	January 22, 2008
Set your own WUE goals	January 22, 2009	January 22, 2008
Submit service meter installation schedule	July 1, 2009	July 1, 2008
Submit first annual performance report	July 1, 2009	July 1, 2008
Install service meters	January 22, 2017	January 22, 2017
Meet 10% leakage standard (based on 3-year average)	Three years after installing all service meters	Three years after installing all service meters



HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

What are some examples of water use efficiency measures?

There are hundreds of water use efficiency measures from which a water system may choose, including: landscape efficiency ordinance, low-flow showerheads, rebates to customers for installing water efficient appliances, using weather-based irrigation systems, and other measures appropriate for your system. Additional guidance on water use efficiency measures is located in the *Getting Started: Water Use Efficiency Guidebook*, DOH Pub. #331-375.

How do I set my water system's goals?

All municipal water suppliers must set their own goals for efficiently using water through a public process. This process assures that water customers and the general public have an opportunity to participate and provide comments on the goals set by the water system to use water efficiently.

What costs are involved in meeting the rule requirements?

The range of costs will vary, depending on system size and other factors such as installing service meters on existing connections, costs involved in water system planning, and costs of implementing a Water Loss Control Action Plan. Detailed cost analysis is available in the document, "Final Significant Analysis and Small Business Economic Impact Statement," which is available on the Office of Drinking Water Web site listed below.

How will this affect my customers' rates?

Although the new rule requires municipal water suppliers to pay more attention to conservation and rate structures, it is the responsibility of each water system to determine which conservation measures best apply to their system and whether rates need to change.

Is there any funding assistance for my water system?

Although we have no current source of funding for water use efficiency activities, DOH is working to identify funding opportunities to assist municipal water suppliers in complying with the rule.

When will guidance documents be available, and what topics will they cover?

Getting Started: Water Use Efficiency Guidebook, DOH Pub. #331-375, is now available online. The guidebook explains how the rule affects water systems, and how it will change the way they do business by requiring them to involve the public in the decision making process. It includes an appendix full of examples, worksheets, and an annual reporting form to help systems comply. If you would like to suggest a topic for additional guidance, contact Mike Dexel at (360) 236-3154.

When will water systems be trained on the new requirements?

DOH will be working with many of our partners to help water systems understand the rule requirements. Training is one of our top priorities. As training opportunities become available, we will post them on the Office of Drinking Water Web site (below) and include them in our quarterly Water Tap newsletter.

Where can I find more information to help me comply with this rule?

You can find additional information on these Web sites:

Office of Drinking Water: http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/water_use_efficiency_rule.htm

American Water Works Association: <http://awwa.org/waterwiser/>

Partnership for Water Conservation: <http://www.partners4water.org/>

Evergreen Rural Water of Washington: <http://www.erwow.org/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm>

The Department of Health is an equal opportunity agency. For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY 1-800-833-6388). For additional copies of this publication, call 1-800-521-0323. This and other publications are available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw>