

Summary of the proposed Drinking Water Acceptable Solution for Roof Water Supplies

What are Acceptable Solutions?

Acceptable Solutions are a new concept introduced in the Water Services Act 2021 (the Act). They provide owners and operators of some types of drinking water supplies with an approved ready-made option to meet their compliance obligations.

Taumata Arowai developed Acceptable Solutions in collaboration with sector reference groups from various drinking water suppliers across Aotearoa. The reference groups included representatives from rural agricultural water supplies, Federated Farmers, Māori communities and local authorities.

According to the Act a drinking water supplier who complies with an Acceptable Solution (appropriate for their water supply) must be regarded as having complied with the relevant legislative requirements. They still have a duty to supply safe drinking water and to comply with the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards (the Standards).

An Acceptable Solution is not the only means of complying with the legislative requirements applicable to a particular water supply. If a water supplier is unable to apply an Acceptable Solution, they can follow the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules.

Drinking water suppliers must follow all the requirements and obligations specified in an Acceptable Solution. These cover the design, configuration, installation, operation, maintenance, testing, monitoring, record keeping, emergency management and auditing required.

Water suppliers who adopt an Acceptable Solution are not required to prepare and submit a drinking water safety plan (including a source water risk management plan). However, all drinking water suppliers adopting an Acceptable Solution are still responsible for identifying and managing risks to their water supply and consumers. As such, all drinking water suppliers are encouraged to implement the broad risk management approach that informs the development of a drinking water safety plan and source water risk management plan.

What are roof water supplies?

In a roof water supply, rainwater is collected off a roof into a storage tank and used for drinking water.

Water may be supplied to a building, or group of buildings, which share the same roof water source. This includes community buildings such as marae, papakāinga, churches, halls, sports clubs, cafés and other businesses.

It does not apply to “domestic self-supplies” where a roof water supply only provides water for one household. These dwellings are not subject to the Act.

There are an estimated 10,000 – 30,000 roof water supplies in New Zealand, excluding domestic self-supplies. This includes an estimated 900 marae.

The Roof Water Acceptable Solution specifies how water can be treated at the point drinking water enters the dwelling from the roof water supply. It provides owners and operators of roof water supplies with an approved solution for providing drinking water to consumers. When applied in full, it achieves compliance with the Act, the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards and the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules prepared by Taumata Arowai.

Key criteria for the use of the Drinking Water Acceptable Solution for Roof Water Supplies

- This solution can only be used where a networked community supply is not available to the dwellings or buildings in question and there are no other drinking water supplies connected to the dwellings or buildings.
- The drinking water supply must have a compliant treatment system that can deliver the required flow rates for the fixtures and appliances in the dwellings or buildings.
- The entire population served must be less than 500 people.