

Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules - proposed changes

The key differences between the proposed Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (Quality Assurance Rules) and the Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand (DWSNZ Revision 2018) are:

- i. The Quality Assurance Rules have been rewritten to ensure they are usable by all New Zealand water suppliers.
- ii. Drinking Water Standards i.e., MAVs, have also been separated out from the Quality Assurance Rules and are presented instead in the separate Drinking Water Standards document.

Structurally, the Quality Assurance Rules have changed from extensive chapters into a module system, with specific rules classified for the variety of New Zealand's drinking water supplies. The Quality Assurance Rules are also numbered and listed for easy reference.

The Water Services Act 2021 imposes some additional requirements on water suppliers compared to Part 2A of the Health Act 1956. These include the requirement for Source Water Risk Management Plans (as a component of Drinking Water Safety Plans). The Water Services Act 2021 also applies to a broader range of drinking water supplies and suppliers who are regulated by Taumata Arowai, encompassing all water supplies that serve more than a single domestic dwelling. The Quality Assurance Rules reflect the increased scope of the Water Services Act 2021.

Key rules that have changed are:

Source water

- i. All source waters must be monitored for a range of determinands/parameters.
- ii. Source waters for level 3 (complex) supplies are classified into four categories to determine the level of protozoa treatment that is required.
- iii. A requirement to demonstrate that a bore head prevents surface water intrusion is still present, but it includes more specific requirements.

Treatment systems

- i. Treatment system types have been reviewed to include only those that are applicable to current industry practice, with some treatment technologies removed including bag filtration, bank filtration and diatomaceous earth filtration.
- ii. Chemical compliance rules for complex drinking water supplies (T3) are now assigned to supplies based on the Typical Value method, rather than Priority classes. These values are used to determine monitoring periods for different chemical determinands relative to their presence in the source water.
- iii. There is the addition of event-based monitoring in the situation of rapidly introduced high concentrations of health-significant chemicals to a water source or treatment plant.
- iv. There are new cyanotoxin compliance rules based on risk categories of the source water.

Distribution systems

- i. There is an increased emphasis on Quality Assurance Rules for distribution systems, especially specific backflow prevention rules.
- ii. Residual disinfection is compulsory unless an exemption is approved by Taumata Arowai, or a relevant acceptable solution is implemented that enables a drinking water supply to operate without residual disinfection.

Other

- i. Monitoring reports and data are to be submitted to the Taumata Arowai portal in accordance with monitoring period frequency requirements set out in the General Rules.
- ii. Tankered water supplies have been added back into the Quality Assurance Rules as 'Water Carrier Services'.
- iii. Planned Temporary Event, Trickle Feed, Self-supplied Building, Community Drinking Water Station and Water Carrier water supplies have all been added with specific rules assigned to these drinking water supply types.
- iv. On-Demand Networked water supplies have been recategorized into four new population brackets; less than 50 people, 50 – 500 people, over 500 people and variable population.