



Drinking Water & Groundwater Program

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
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Guidance for Determining When Drinking Water Plan Review Is Required for Community Water Systems

August 2022

This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in statute or administrative rule are referenced. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts.

Plan Review Approvals: Determining When Plan Review is Required

Sections NR 108.02(13)(b), NR 811.08, NR 809.547(4)(d)9. Wis. Adm. Code

Purpose: Prior department approval is required for any new or existing community water system making improvements, extensions or alterations which may affect the quality or quantity of water delivered. This guidance is intended to be used as a resource for DNR plan review staff, DNR field staff, municipal water system staff and consultants to determine the appropriate review process for water system projects in compliance with current code requirements (chs. NR 108, 810, and 811, Wis. Adm. Code).

Background: Water systems and consultants often have questions about what type of projects require prior department plan review. A reviewable project is defined in s. NR 108.02 (13)(b), Wis. Adm. Code as any improvements, extensions or alterations which may affect the quality or quantity of water delivered by an existing community water system. Certain projects that may impact lead and copper also require review. These projects include adding a new source of water or changing treatment in systems deemed to have optimized corrosion control (s. NR 809.542(2)(c)3., Wis. Adm. Code), systems with reduced monitoring (s. NR 809.547(4)(d), Wis. Adm. Code), and systems with monitoring waivers (s. NR 809.547(7)(d)3. Wis. Adm. Code)

This guidance was created by the department's Public Water Engineering Section to ensure statewide consistency in program implementation. This guidance was developed to help DNR plan review staff, DNR field staff, municipal water system staff and consultants determine which type of projects require prior department approval.

Document Organization: This guidance outlines examples of common projects done at water system and indicates if prior plan approval is required. Project categories are listed in the following order:

- Source Water (wells and surface water intakes)
- Pumps (wells, intakes, high-lift, low-lift, etc.)
- Treatment
- Chemical Addition
- Storage Facilities
- Water mains
- Buildings (wellhouses, treatment plants, storage facilities, booster stations, etc.)

Periodic Review Required: This guidance will be periodically reviewed by the department's Public Water Engineering Section.

Disclaimer: This guide establishes Safe Drinking Water Act program implementation protocols, policies, and procedures for DNR staff. This guide contains some references to and information about state statutes and administrative rules but does not necessarily include all of the details found in the statutes and rules. Users of the guide must consult the actual language of the statutes and rules in order to answer specific questions regarding water system compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.

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Sections NR 108.02(13)(b), NR 811.08, NR 809.547(4)(d)9. Wis. Adm. Code

Project Type	Engineering Plan Review and Approval Requirements		
	Prior Plan Review and Approval Required	No Plan Review and Approval Required ² (if like-kind replacement – same size/capacity, shape, type, location, no operational changes etc.)	Lead and Copper Rule Review Required
Source Water (wells and surface water intakes)			
Surface water intake – install new or modify existing	X ¹		X
Construct new well	X ¹		X
Reconstruct well	X		X
Well rehabilitation	X		
Well casing – modify for installation of appurtenances	X		
Well head – reconstruct or modify for installation of appurtenances	X		
Well head – sealing (replace displaced or missing caulk, etc.)		X	
Wellhead protection plan	X		
Well abandonment via method specified in code		X	
Well abandonment via method not specified in code	X		
Well abandonment of contaminated well	X		
Wellhead Protection Plan	X		
Pumps (wells, intakes, high-lift, low-lift, etc.)			
Pump – replace with like-kind		X	
Pump – install new or replace with different pump type or capacity	X		
Pump discharge piping or appurtenances – replace with like-kind		X	
Pump discharge piping or appurtenances – install new or modify existing	X		
New Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) installation	X		
Well pump base reconstruction	X		

¹ Non-subdivision, non-municipal community water systems may submit plans and specifications by a well driller or pump installer registered in Wisconsin. Projects for municipal or subdivision water systems must be submitted by a Professional Engineer.

² Notify your DNR Field Representative of work done

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Treatment			
Pilot Study	X		
Treatment equipment and processes – install new or modify existing (increasing capacity, piping modifications, etc.)	X ¹		
Filters – modify existing (structural or interior coatings)	X ¹		
Filter media – replace with like-kind		X	
Filter media – replace with different media or modify configuration	X ¹		X
Membranes – install new or replace existing	X		
Eye wash station or safety equipment – install new or replace existing		X	
Water monitoring equipment – new and directly connected to finished water	X		
Stop treatment process for primary contaminant	X ¹		X
Stop treatment process for unregulated or secondary contaminant	X		X
Control or operational modifications	X		

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Chemical Addition			
New chemical addition (permanent or temporary) and associated chemical feed system	X		X
Chemical change (dose, blend or chemical)	See guidance document on specific approval requirements for chemical change projects		
Chemical injection point – change location	X		X
Chemical feed equipment – replace with like-kind (pumps, storage, etc.)		X	
Chemical feed equipment – install new or replace with different kind (pumps, storage, etc.)	X		
Stop chemical feed for treating unregulated or secondary contaminant	X		X
Stop chemical feed for treating primary contaminant	X ¹		X
Emergency shut-off equipment	X		
Storage Facilities			
Construct new storage facility	X ¹		X
Paint/coat wet interior	X		
Paint/coat exterior		X	
Rehabilitation or repair of storage facilities (vents, overflows, access hatches)	X		
Decommissioning storage facility (permanent)	X ¹		X
Aeration/Mixing system installation	X		

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Water Mains			
Water main construction/extension	X ¹		
Raw water transmission main construction/extension	X ¹		X
Water main replacement, relay or lining (CIPP, SIPP, etc.)	X ¹		
Replace hydrant or valve		X	
Install hydrant or automatic flushing device	X ¹		
Buildings (wellhouses, treatment plants, storage facilities, booster stations, etc.)			
Building – construct new or expand existing	X ¹		
Emergency electrical generator – install new	X		
Transfer Switch Installation		X	
Security system upgrades		X	
Miscellaneous			
Water System Master Plans (if no infrastructure or operational changes)		X	

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