

OWNER AND OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NONCOMMUNITY WATER SUPPLIES

Guidance

OVERVIEW

"Supplier of water" or "supplier" is defined as a person who **owns** or **operates** a public water supply. It is the duty of both the owner and operator to make sure the water served to the public follows all of the rules outlined in the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, 1976 PA 399, and Administrative Rules, as amended (SDWA).

Supplier Duties:

1. Provide a reasonable supply of safe water to the public.
2. Maintain and operate the system in a safe and clean condition.
3. Collect water samples and report the results to the local health department.
4. Notify consumers of the water in cases of noncompliance.
5. Obtain permits for construction or changes to the water supply.
6. Maintain accurate records.

The SDWA requires certified drinking water operators for **ALL** nontransient noncommunity water supplies. A certified operator is also required at transient supplies that treat the water in order to meet a regulatory standard. Operators are also required at supplies that add chemicals to the water for any reason. Operators must be certified at or above the level of the water system (F, D, or S) classification. Most nontransient supplies will fall into the "lower" S classification. A supplier of water can choose whether they will hire an outside party to serve as their certified operator. Supplies can also have an employee become certified by the State and serve as the drinking water operator.

OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

An operator in charge (OIC) is a properly certified operator who is chosen by the owner of a public water supply as the person in charge of a water system. The OIC makes choices regarding the daily activities of the system that will directly affect the drinking water.

The following criteria have been set to define the minimum acceptable oversight for NCWS's.

D-5 Systems: Under standard operation, an OIC shall be employed by the water supply. While employed they should make **weekly** visits to the water supply and be on call 24 hours per day. They should also supervise and direct staff responsible for daily operations. If a supply has acceptable oversight, site visits may be reduced to two times a month. The health department must approve a reduced schedule for site visits. This approval shall be in writing and reassessed either when the OIC leaves the supply, or if system conditions change.

S-5 Systems: Under standard operation, an OIC shall be employed by the water supply. While employed they should make **monthly** visits to the supply and be on call 24 hours per day. They should also supervise and direct staff responsible for daily operations. If a supply has acceptable oversight, standard site visits may be reduced to once a quarter. This approval shall be in writing and re-assessed either when the OIC leaves the supply, or if system conditions change.

The OIC is more than a person who simply shows up occasionally to collect water samples.

Additional duties of the OIC include, but are not limited to:

1. Keep records and submit reports.
2. Perform precautionary measures and post Public Notices as needed.
3. At least every three months visually check the wellhead, pressure tank, and pumping equipment. Also, visually inspect any treatment equipment. Check the system for leaks or other problems.
4. Treatment operators shall inspect treatment equipment and measure chlorine residuals as directed in the treatment permit.
5. Look for potential cross connections and inspect the cross connection control devices. Make sure that a certified tester inspects the testable backflow devices. Make sure this is done at the time established in the cross connection control program.

OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

If a system does not have a certified operator, or if the operator's certification expired, the owner will be notified that they are violating the SDWA rules.

The SDWA rules require the supply to have a certified operator at all times. Although the owner of a supply must obtain an operator to follow the rules, the owner is also responsible for complying with the SDWA.

The owner's duties include but are not limited to:

1. Hire or appoint an operator certified with the correct certification in a reasonable time frame.
2. Notify the Local Health Department (LHD) within 7 days when the status of an operator at a supply changes.
3. Notify the LHD of any positive total coliform results within 24 hours or by the end of the next business day.
4. Notify the LHD of any proposed modifications to the drinking water supply system or water well, i.e. new plumbing or pump replacement.
5. Pay any fees or fines authorized by the SDWA.

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