



DATE: December 24, 2025

TO: Kathleen Buchli, Code Reviser

FROM: Tami Thompson, Regulatory
Affairs Manager

SUBJECT: Rescind Policy Statement | Hydraulic Connection Source Requirements
Filed as WSR 01-10-134

This memo serves as notice that the Department of Health (department) is rescinding a policy statement regarding Requirements for Sources in Hydraulic Connection to Surface Water which was filed on May 2, 2001, and published in WSR 01-10-134.

This statement provided direction to staff and interested parties regarding how long disinfection may be deferred, and what requirements and recommendations would apply while awaiting source modifications or installation of treatment facilities. The department is rescinding this policy because it is outdated and does not reflect our current business practices.

Individuals requiring additional information on this should contact Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager for the Office of Drinking Water at mike.means@doh.wa.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

cc: Mike Means, Water Quality, Policy, and Certification Manager

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: January 15, 2026

TIME: 9:53 AM

WSR 26-03-052

Consistency Statement

March 30, 2001

Topic: Requirements for Sources in Hydraulic Connection to Surface Water Section: WAC 246-290-640(4)

Issue/Question: Once a potential ground water under the direct influence of surface water (GWI) source is determined or presumed to be in "hydraulic connection" (defined below) to a surface water (SW) the purveyor is required to provide disinfection treatment, unless the purveyor chooses to modify the source to mitigate SW influence. During this period of unknown risk to public health, the regulations do not specify a schedule to initiate disinfection. Should we allow disinfection to be deferred, and if so for how long, and what requirements should apply while awaiting adequate treatment?

Discussion: WAC 246-290-640 mentions three points during the GWI determination process when purveyors are allowed the opportunity to modify a source to mitigate direct surface influence instead of providing treatment: (1) when the source is classified as a potential GWI, (2) when hydraulic connectivity to SW is established, or (3) after it is classified as a GWI. DW staff should present this option to purveyors along with treatment options. Under this scenario, provision of disinfection will depend upon the source modifications made and subsequent water quality monitoring results evaluated. Until changes are made, consumers should be informed of the public health risk that exists and how to mitigate those risks.

"Hydraulic Connectivity" (HC) is defined as a condition where water from one location (SW body) can reach another location (well) through pervious geologies in a relatively rapid manner. When determining if a source is GWI, HC usually occurs between a potential GWI and an identifiable SW. In the GWI determination process, sources, such as springs, that have no identifiable SW body that could influence them but are constructed in a relatively shallow aquifer that might be subject to surface water runoff, will be treated as though they are in HC to SW.

For sources determined or presumed to be in HC to a SW, the next step in the GWI determination process is taking the MPA samples. This may take up to another year to obtain results. Once MPA results are available, treatment decisions are better defined. Results of the first two MPA tests will fall into one of three categories: (1) The source is GWI and subject to SW treatment requirements, (2) The source is GW and no more MPA samples are needed, or (3) The MPA tests are inconclusive and the water system must do MPA tests for up to four more years or until the results are conclusive, whichever occurs first. For (1) and (2) above, the treatment requirements are defined in regulation and will not change soon. For (3), the treatment requirements may or may not change. They will change if the source ever becomes a GWI.

Decision:

Per the attached flowchart, requirements for all sources determined to be in HC to a SW and awaiting MPA results, and for those sources in category (3) above, are established as follows:

- When a source is determined or presumed to be in HC to a SW, staff will inform purveyors of available options. The letter will instruct the purveyor of when to take the first two MPA tests or to coordinate with a department-approved lab regarding taking the first two samples.
- Within 90 days of the determination of HC, the purveyor shall provide an action plan outlining their intended approach to resolve the situation and including the following elements:
 - If modification of the source to preclude surface water influence is proposed, the action plan shall address preparation of a supporting project report prepared by a professional engineer (P.E.)
 - If modification of the source is not proposed, the action plan shall address timing for the P.E.'s design of treatment and submittal of project/construction documents. Treatment design and the associated schedule will be based upon the results of the first two MPA samples.
 - Identify how consumers will be notified of test results, treatment options and timing, and how to mitigate risks to their health during the interim period. (Guidance on content, distribution, and frequency of consumer notice should be enclosed with the MPA letter described above.)
- Disinfection must be installed within 120 days of the first two MPA test results, unless an alternate schedule is adequately justified and negotiated in a Bilateral Compliance Agreement (BCA). The requirement of CT=6 for GW disinfection will not be changed unless any promulgated federal rule requires a more stringent level of disinfection.

Determination of GWI Sources WAC 246-290-640

