



Water Security
Agency 

Water Treatment Plant
Regulation in Saskatchewan

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WSA 500

Water is one of our most precious resources. We depend on water every day. A source of safe drinking water is essential to maintaining our high quality of life and growth as a province. The Water Security Agency (WSA) is responsible for regulating drinking water systems in Saskatchewan. As more and more communities grow, the demand to upgrade or build new drinking water systems has increased. This fact sheet outlines important information for following provincial regulations in order to ensure everyone enjoys a safe source of drinking water.

Permits are Required to Build, Alter and/or Operate a Waterworks

The WSA is the regulator of drinking water systems in Saskatchewan. The agency regulates the following works:

- all municipal “waterworks systems”;
- municipal wells connected to an underground distribution system;
- any pipeline directly connected to a municipal waterworks;
- any pipelines not otherwise directly connected to a municipal waterworks with at least 15 service connections; and
- any other waterworks with a capacity of 18m³/day or more.

New or altered water treatment plants, associated water distribution systems and pipelines (as outlined above) require a Permit to Construct from WSA prior to commencing construction.

Permits to Construct

Obtaining a Permit to Construct helps ensure the finished work meets provincial regulatory requirements, prevents costly modifications to the newly constructed works and reduces the likelihood of compliance actions being imposed by the WSA. Reviewing applications and issuing Permits to Construct are some of the tools that the WSA uses to improve the safety of public drinking water in the province.

The WSA approves construction of treatment plants on a case-by-case basis by issuing a Permit to Construct for an individual project. In Saskatchewan, there is no blanket Permit to Construct approval for installation of any type of treatment plant. Approvals are issued subject to compliance with the WSA’s Waterworks Design Standard, June 2015, EPB 501.

WSA does not endorse any water treatment device. Advertising by water treatment equipment manufacturers and designers is not verified or endorsed by the WSA.

Will the Time Required to Issue a Permit Impact My Project?

WSA typically issues permits within 45 days of receiving all the required information for the application. If you need the permit faster than 45 days, we ask that you state your timeline on the application and phone an Approvals Engineer to discuss the timeline.

A complex project or an incomplete application may require more than 45 days for a complete review and issuance of a Permit to Construct.

We recommend building the permit timeline into your project schedule—planning ahead can ensure your project is not delayed while waiting for the permit prior to construction. For larger staged projects, WSA can often perform the permit review using the pre-design stage documents and issue Permits to Construct for individual phases in order to speed up the review process.



Permits to Operate

Unless otherwise directed by the WSA, a Permit to Operate a waterworks must be obtained prior to the works being put into service. Permits to Operate lay out the operational requirements for waterworks owners including sampling and monitoring, and aid in the protection of public health and the environment.

Cost for Annual Operation

Costs for the annual operation of a water treatment plant vary depending upon the size and complexity of the plant. A complex treatment plant that has more treatment steps often requires a higher number of chemicals and more labour, and has a higher overall operation and maintenance cost than a simpler treatment plant.

Need for Certified Operators

The operation, maintenance and repair of a water treatment plant needs to be under the direction of a certified operator at all times. This means there needs to be at least one operator and in some cases a backup operator or access to a backup operator certified at a similar level. The required level of operator certification is based largely on plant complexity—a complex treatment plant that has more treatment steps requires a higher level of operator certification than a simpler treatment plant.

Waterworks owners need to keep in mind that operators may need to undertake additional education, training and examination to operate new or upgraded complex plants even if the plant has a small capacity. Operators also need to undertake ongoing education to qualify for regular certification renewal.

For more information concerning permits for drinking water systems, please contact the WSA at 306-787-0726 or 306-694-3900.