

Key Legal Obligations

Owners of public water system are responsible to ensure that the drinking water is safe and reliable for those who use the system. The following are some of the key legal obligations:

1. Water quality must meet all health standards. (Section 116555 of the CHSC)
2. Community water systems and Non-Transient, Non-Community water systems are required to issue an Annual Water Quality Report to their customers. (Section 116470 of the CHSC)
3. An adequate quantity of water must always be available. (Section 116555 of the CHSC)
4. Water must always be delivered under proper pressure (at least 20 pounds per square inch, Title 22, Code of Regulations Section 64566).
5. The system must be properly operated, maintained and protected from damage and contamination.
6. The system cannot be connected to another, unapproved system or source (Section 116550 CHSC)
7. System must operate under a valid water supply permit. Any changes or additions to source or treatment, requires the system to apply for and receive an amended permit. (Section 116525 CHSC)
8. Water system must pay all required water system regulatory fees (many fees are set in regulation).
9. Water system must submit an annual report to the regulatory agency as required. The form for this report is sent to each public water system each year. (Section 116530 of the CHSC)
10. As of January 1, 1998 new public water systems and water systems which change ownership must meet Technical, Managerial and Financial (TMF) requirements. (Section 116540 of the CHSC). The 1996 federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) introduced the concept of TMF Capacity for public water systems. This concept involves a public water system having the capability through its financial resources, technical resources, organizational structure and personnel to comply with all applicable drinking water standards and regulations. In addition, the concept of capacity involves being able to plan for the future and use the necessary resources to keep the water system in compliance. Some of the items to be addressed include; a system description, source assessment, technical evaluation (including consolidation), operations plan, operator certification, ownership, organization, water rights, customer service policies, budget protection and control, reserves, and capital improvement.

CITATIONS

Obligations

1 and #3

116555. (a) Any person who owns a public water system shall ensure that the system does all of the following:

- (1) Complies with primary and secondary drinking water standards.
- (2) Will not be subject to backflow under normal operating conditions.
- (3) Provides a reliable and adequate supply of pure, wholesome, healthful, and potable water.
- (4) Employs or utilizes only water treatment operators or water treatment operators-in-training that have been certified by the department at the appropriate grade.
- (5) Complies with the operator certification program established pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 106875).

(b) Any person who owns a community water system or a nontransient noncommunity water system shall do all of the following:

- (1) Employ or utilize only water distribution system operators who have been certified by the department at the appropriate grade for positions in responsible charge of the distribution system.
- (2) Place the direct supervision of the water system, including water treatment plants, water distribution systems, or both under the responsible charge of an operator or operators holding a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of the treatment plant and the distribution system.

116470. (a) As a condition of its operating permit, every public water system shall annually prepare a consumer confidence report and mail or deliver a copy of that report to each customer, other than an occupant, as defined in Section 799.28 of the Civil Code, of a recreational vehicle park. A public water system in a recreational vehicle park with occupants as defined in Section 799.28 of the Civil Code shall prominently display on a bulletin board at the entrance to or in the office of the park, and make available upon request, a copy of the report. The report shall include all of the following information:

- (1) The source of the water purveyed by the public water system.
- (2) A brief and plainly worded definition of the terms "maximum contaminant level," "primary drinking water standard," and "public health goal."
- (3) If any regulated contaminant is detected in public drinking water supplied by the system during the past year, the report shall include all of the following information:
 - (A) The level of the contaminant found in the drinking water, and the corresponding public health goal and primary drinking water standard for that contaminant.
 - (B) Any violations of the primary drinking water standard that have occurred as a result of the presence of the contaminant in the drinking water and a brief and plainly worded statement of health concerns that resulted in the regulation of that contaminant.
 - (C) The public water system's address and phone number to enable customers to obtain further information concerning contaminants and potential health effects.
- (4) Information on the levels of unregulated contaminants, if any, for which monitoring is required pursuant to state or federal law or regulation.
- (5) Disclosure of any variances or exemptions from primary drinking water standards granted to the system and the basis therefor.

(b) On or before July 1, 1998, and every three years thereafter, public water systems serving more than 10,000 service connections that detect one or more contaminants in drinking water that exceed the applicable public health goal, shall prepare a brief written report in plain language that does all of the following:

- (1) Identifies each contaminant detected in drinking water that exceeds the applicable public health goal.
- (2) Discloses the numerical public health risk, determined by the office, associated with the maximum contaminant level for each contaminant identified in paragraph (1) and the numerical public health risk determined by the office associated with the public health goal for that contaminant.
- (3) Identifies the category of risk to public health, including, but not limited to, carcinogenic, mutagenic, teratogenic, and acute toxicity, associated with exposure to the contaminant in drinking water, and includes a brief plainly worded description of these terms.
- (4) Describes the best available technology, if any is then available on a commercial basis, to remove the contaminant or reduce the concentration of the contaminant. The public water system may, solely at its own discretion, briefly describe actions that have been taken on its own, or by other entities, to prevent the introduction of the contaminant into drinking water supplies.
- (5) Estimates the aggregate cost and the cost per customer of utilizing the technology described in paragraph (4), if any, to reduce the concentration of that contaminant in drinking water to a level at or below the public health goal.
- (6) Briefly describes what action, if any, the local water purveyor intends to take to reduce the concentration of the contaminant in public drinking water supplies and the basis for that decision.

(c) Public water systems required to prepare a report pursuant to subdivision (b) shall hold a public hearing for the purpose of accepting and responding to public comment on the report. Public water systems may hold the public hearing as part of any regularly scheduled meeting.

(d) The department shall not require a public water system to take any action to reduce or eliminate any exceedance of a public health goal.

(e) Enforcement of this section does not require the department to amend a public water system's operating permit.

(f) Pending adoption of a public health goal by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 116365, and in lieu thereof, public water systems shall use the national maximum contaminant level goal adopted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for the corresponding contaminant for purposes of complying with the notice and hearing requirements of this section.

(g) This section is intended to provide an alternative form for the federally required consumer confidence report as authorized by 42 U.S.C. Section 300g-3(c).

Obligation

#4

§64566. System Pressure.

(a) Changes in distribution systems shall be designed to maintain an operating pressure at all service connections of not less than 20 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) (140 kiloPascals gauge (kPag)) under the following demand conditions:

- (1) User maximum hour demand.
- (2) User average day demand plus design fire flow.

(b) In a public water system supplying users at widely varying elevations, a water supplier may furnish a service to a user which does not comply with (a) if the user is fully advised of the conditions under which minimum service may be expected and the user's agreement is secured in writing. This waiver shall be applicable only to individual service connections.

(c) Water mains shall be designed to have at least five psig (35 kPag) pressure throughout any buried length of the main except when the main is removed from service for repairs or maintenance. This requirement shall not apply to short lengths of water main near reservoir inlets and outlets provided:

- (1) The water main is on premises owned, leased or controlled by the water supplier; or
- (2) The prior review and written approval of the Department is obtained.

Obligation

#6

116550. (a) No person operating a public water system shall modify, add to or change his or her source of supply or method of treatment of, or change his or her distribution system as authorized by a valid existing permit issued to him or her by the department unless the person first submits an application to the department and receives an amended permit as provided in this chapter authorizing the modification, addition, or change in his or her source of supply or method of treatment.

(b) Unless otherwise directed by the department, changes in distribution systems may be made without the submission of a permit application if the changes comply in all particulars with the waterworks standards.

Obligation

#7

116525. (a) No person shall operate a public water system unless he or she first submits an application to the department and receives a permit as provided in this chapter. A change in ownership of a public water system shall require the submission of a new application.

(b) The department may require a new application whenever a change in regulatory jurisdiction has occurred.

(c) The department may renew, reissue, revise, or amend any domestic water supply permit whenever the department deems it to be necessary for the protection of public health whether or not an application has been filed.

Obligation

#9

116530. A public water system shall submit a technical report to the department as part of the permit application or when otherwise required by the department. This report may include, but not be limited to, detailed plans and specifications, water quality information, and physical descriptions of the existing or proposed system, and financial assurance information.

Obligation

#10

116540. Following completion of the investigation and satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (a) and (b), the department shall issue or deny the permit. The department may impose permit conditions, requirements for system improvements, and time schedules as it deems necessary to assure a reliable and adequate supply of water at all times that is pure, wholesome, potable, and does not endanger the health of consumers.

(a) No public water system that was not in existence on January 1, 1998, shall be granted a permit unless the system demonstrates to the department that the water supplier possesses adequate financial, managerial, and technical capability to assure the delivery of pure, wholesome, and potable drinking water. This section shall also apply to any change of ownership of a public water system that occurs after January 1, 1998.

(b) No permit under this chapter shall be issued to an association organized under Title 3 (commencing with Section 20000) of Division 3 of the Corporations **Code**. This section shall not apply to unincorporated associations that as of December 31, 1990, are holders of a permit issued under this chapter.

