



Interpretation of Memorandum of Understanding for Non-Public Water Supplies

Question: What is a public water well?

A public water well is defined as any well constructed as a source of supply for a water system which provides piped water to the public for human consumption, if such a system has 15 service connections or regularly serves more than 25 individuals, excluding individual water wells. Public Water Systems (PWS) are defined as either a Community PWS, Non-Community PWS and Transient Non-Community PWS. Community water systems serve 25 individuals, or more, year around (subdivisions, mobile home parks, etc.). Non-Community water system serves 15 connection or 25 individuals, or more, 60 days in the year (Food Service, Public Pools, Tourist Accommodations) and Transient Non-Community serves 25 individuals, or more, 6 months out of the year (schools, some businesses and industry).

Question: What is a non-public health department regulated well?

A non-public health department regulated well has gone through the EPD PWS review process detailed in the Memorandum Understanding for Non-Public Water Supplies (1994) and did not meet the criteria for a public water well. Therefore, it would fall under the regulating authority of the local county health department to satisfy the requirements for an approved water supply under the applicable DPH rules for Food Service, Tourist Accommodations, Public Pool, and/or Body Art Studios Rules.

Question: Within the MOU, what is the difference between new facilities and existing facilities?

New facilities include:

- Any proposed facility construction with a proposed construction of a water supply system. This means a new building that is constructed for a board of health or DPH regulated facility that will be served by a non-public well; OR
- Any existing facility being converted to a board of health or DPH regulated facility with a proposed construction of a new non-public well_water supply system.

Existing facilities include:

- Any existing facility with a constructed public water supply system that is permitted by EPD; OR

Any existing facility (Food Service Establishment, Public Pool, Tourist Accommodations, Body Art Studio) permitted by the local health departments served by a non-public well water system; OR

Any existing facility with an existing individual well that will be converted into a facility that will be permitted by the local health department.

Any water supply system determined by EPD to be a non-public water system, and has not had prior local health department approval, must be reviewed to conform to the requirements of the DPH Review Process for Non-Public Water Supply. An existing well may be remediated under the guidance of a licensed well driller or require replacement if it cannot comply to the

requirements and meet drinking water standards. If replaced, the new water well must comply with the guidelines of the MOU for Non-Public Water Systems Review Process for new facilities.

Question: What are the sampling criteria for non-public water supplies regulated through the health department?

1. Sampling compliance with the Sampling Requirements for Non-Public Water Supplies

a. Initial sampling must meet all acceptable MCLs and be negative for the presence of total/fecal coliforms prior to the approval of the water supply.

2. Inorganic chemical specified in the Review Process for Non-Public Water Supplies are sampled annually.

a. Concentrations exceeding recommended MCLs that pose a public health threat will result in the disapproval of the water supply and the facility should be closed. MCLs that pose a public health threat include the following: pH, Alkalinity (as CaCO₃), Hardness (as CaCO₃), Carbon dioxide, Zinc, Chloride, Iron, Nitrate (as N), Nitrite (as N), Total Nitrate and Nitrite (as N), Total Dissolved Solids, Turbidity (NTUs), Manganese, Color (color units), Sulfate

3. Total/fecal coliform sampling is quarterly.

a. A positive total or fecal coliform sample will require re-sampling within 24 hours to confirm the results of the original sample. If the second sample is positive for the presence of total or fecal coliform, the water supply will be considered disapproved, and the facility should be closed. Disinfecting of the well should be initiated to disinfect the water supply and water supply system. There may be a possibility for the facility to continue to operate if an alternative source of potable water can be provided and is granted approval by the District Medical Director. An alternative water supply shall not be used for more than 7 days.

b. After disinfecting the well, a sample will be taken and analyzed for the presence of total/fecal coliform. Another sample will be taken in 30 days and analyzed for the presence of total/fecal coliform.

c. It is recommended that at least one sample be taken by the county environmentalist during the year at the time of the routine inspection of the facility and analyzed for the presence of total/fecal coliform.

Question: What steps should be taken if a non-public regulated well gets a positive result on the total/fecal coliform test?

If a water supply system yields a water sample positive for total or fecal coliform, the local county health department should return immediately to take another sample from the water system prior to chlorination. The chlorine residual should be tested first, prior to sampling to avoid a false negative result. If the second water sample is positive for total or fecal coliform, then the well should be disinfected following Chlorination Instructions for Non-Public Water Systems, the water supply will be considered disapproved, and the facility should be closed.

Question: Is it possible to use an alternate water source rather than closing the facility?

Acceptable alternative sources of potable water may be another water well that is approved by EPD or the local health department and in compliance with sampling requirements. Any other sources of potable water used to operate the facility must be approved by the District Medical Director.

Question: What steps should be taken if a second sample comes back positive for total/fecal coliform?

If after disinfection, a water sample is positive for total or fecal coliform; the water supply will be considered disapproved. The water supply system should be remediated or replaced by a licensed well contractor with guidance from the local health department. Note that any proposed well construction must start from the beginning of the review process for the Non-Public Water Systems outlined in the MOU – that is, first obtain a letter from EPD stating the water system is not a Public Water System.

Question: If I am installing a new well that will be serving a restaurant, at what point should I alert the County Health Department?

As with all new well installations, the local county health department must receive notification (Intent to Drill Form) from the water well contractor prior to drilling or construction of the well. The local health department must contact the EPD Regional Office. If the EPD Regional Office determines that the proposed water system is or will be a non-public water system, then the following information must be submitted to the local county health department for review.

Question: Where in Georgia Code does it require well drillers to contact the health department prior to construction?

OCGA 12-5-134 Standards for wells and boreholes (1) In the case of individual and non-public water wells (A) (i) The well should be located as far removed, and in a direction opposite to the ground-water flow, from known or potential sources of pollutants as the general layout of the premises and surroundings permits; however, prior to actual construction, the water well contractor shall notify the county health department of the intent to drill a water well, providing such information as is required on forms prepared by the council.

Question: What exactly does the review process for non-public water supplies include?

Review Process for Non-Public Water Supply

1. A letter from EPD stating the water system is not a Public Water System
2. A map showing the geographical location of the project, location of the governmentally owned and operated public water system closest to the site, and a layout of the proposed facilities showing the location of the proposed well(s), storage tank(s) water treatment facilities, etc., as applicable must be included. Connection shall be made to a public water system when such system is available within two hundred feet of the property line through a public access easement.
3. If the owner of the water system is other than the owner of the establishment, submit a business plan, contract, or trust agreement as needed which adequately addresses the source and amount of water provided.
4. For new facilities to be served by a non-public water well, a drilled well meeting the construction criteria found in the Water Well Standards Act is required. Engineering plans and specifications for the proposed water supply system, prepared by a professional engineer licensed to practice in the State of Georgia, may be required for review and approval.
5. For new facilities, a Well Data Sheet for each source, completed and signed by a water well contractor licensed to construct wells in the State of Georgia must be submitted for review.
6. Each new water system must be metered at the facility.

7. For existing facilities, a sanitary survey of the existing constructed facilities must be made by a water well contractor, licensed in the State of Georgia, or county environmental health specialist to evaluate the well construction and protection.

8. Physical and chemical “screening” of the untreated water from each water source (well) must be performed for the following parameters by an approved water laboratory, and a copy of the results provided to the local health department. (EPD Test W-33). Aluminum, pH, Zinc, Nitrate (as N), Turbidity (NTU’s), Phosphorus, Boron, Alkalinity, Chloride, Nitrite (as N), Manganese, Potassium, Copper, Hardness, Cadmium, Total Nitrate & Nitrate (as Color (color units), Calcium, Sodium, Carbon dioxide, Iron, Total Dissolved Solids, Sulfate, Magnesium, Chromium, Nickel, Molybdenum, Soluble Salts.

9. At least one untreated water sample must be collected from each source and submitted to an approved water laboratory for microbiological analyses. (Total and Fecal Coliform). A copy of the results must be submitted to the local health Department.

10. Physical and chemical sampling must be performed annually. Microbial sampling must be performed quarterly. Sample results shall be submitted to the county health department. Failure to meet physical, chemical, or microbial potable water standards will result in disapproval of the water supply for use in foodservice establishments, tourist facilities or public swimming pools.

Question: For new facilities, what exactly should plans and specifications include?

Plans and specifications must be submitted with the required map showing the geographical location of the project, location of the nearest public water supply, and a layout of the proposed facilities showing the location of the proposed well(s), storage tank(s) water treatment facilities, etc. They should also include details of the distribution system and cross connections. It is recommended that these plans be prepared by a professional engineer licensed to practice in the State of Georgia working in their area of competency. A County Board of Health may also accept plans from any person whom it determines to have sufficient knowledge, such as a well driller licensed in Georgia, etc.