



PLAN AND SPECIFICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

This document provides a quick reference of the plan and specification review requirements for public water systems. This information is provided to assist with interpretation of the requirements, but may not cover the entire regulation. For a complete copy of the DEQ Drinking Water Regulations or additional information please call (406) 444-4400. Similar requirements apply to public sewage systems, but they are not addressed in this document.

Prior to the construction, alteration, or extension, of a public water supply system, written approval of the plans and specifications for this work must be obtained from the Engineering Services Section of the Public Water Supply Program of DEQ. In some cases, a designated division of the local government may perform the review. This review helps ensure that construction meets state design standards so as to protect public health and the quality of Montana's water. Refer to Administrative Rules of Montana 17.38.101.

Design Standards and Professional Engineer Requirements

Design Standards

- Community Water System – The design report, plans, and specifications must be prepared by a professional engineer in accordance with Circular DEQ-1.
- Non-Community Water System – The design report, plans, and specifications can often be prepared by a qualified professional and must be in accordance with Circular DEQ-3. However, DEQ may require that the design be prepared by a professional engineer if the complexity of the proposed construction warrants this. Also, if a treatment process or other infrastructure that is not covered under DEQ-3 is proposed, the design is subject to the standards in Circular DEQ-1, and a professional engineer must design and prepare the plans and specifications.

Expedited Review Processes

- Water Main Extension or Replacement - plans and specifications may be submitted under an expedited process using the "Water Main Certified Checklist." To make use of this expedited process, plans and specifications must be prepared by a professional engineer.
- Installation of New Water Supply Well - plans and specifications may be submitted under an expedited process using either the "Community Water Supply Well Expedited Review Checklist" or the "Non-community Water Supply Well Expedited Review Checklist". To make use of this expedited process, plans and specifications must be prepared by a professional engineer.

Deviation Request

In some situations, it may be difficult, or impossible for the proposed project to conform to a specific section of the design standards. In these situations, you may request a deviation from the standard. The request must be provided in writing, and must demonstrate that following the standards is not necessary to protect public health and the quality of the state waters. A fee is required to accompany the deviation request.

General Plan and Specification Review Steps:

1. Applicant - Submit plans and specifications along with review fee to DEQ for review and approval
2. DEQ - Review submittals within 60 days of submittal
3. DEQ - Approve, modify, request additional information, or deny submittal
4. Applicant - Submit additional information or amended plans and specifications if necessary
5. DEQ - Provide approval when all requirements and standards are met
6. Applicant - Complete construction in accordance with the approved plans and specifications within 3 years and provide inspection
7. Applicant - Certify that construction was in accordance with approved plans and specifications prior to operation of the system
8. Applicant - Submit as-built plans within 90 days of construction completion



Submittal Requirements

The first step in the review and approval process is for the owner or the owner's representative to submit the appropriate documentation to DEQ for review.

Submittal Components

- Design report
- Three sets of plans and specifications prepared in accordance with appropriate design standards
- Appropriate fees as set forth in ARM 17.38.106
- Documentation indicating commitment to retain a qualified professional to provide certification that the construction was completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

Fee Schedules

Fees for review of plans and specifications as well as deviations are assessed in accordance with ARM 17.38.106. Fees for the review of plans and specifications not listed on the schedules are established by DEQ based on an hourly rate.

Resubmittals

If a project has been inactive for more than a year following the DEQ denial of a submittal, the submittal will be considered void. The system owner must resubmit the plans and specifications if the owner wishes to "revive" the submittal.

DEQ Review Process and Timeline

Within 60 days of receipt of the submittal (or any resubmittal), DEQ will take one of the following actions:

- Approve the submittal;
- Approve the submittal with conditions;
- Request additional information or an revised submittal; or
- Deny the proposal.

Plans and specifications submitted under the water main or new well checklist process may be processed in as few as 10 and 15 working days (respectively).

Construction Period Requirements

Construction must be completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications. Any deviation must be approved in writing by DEQ prior to implementing the requested change.

Construction must be completed within 3 years of the approval date. If construction is not completed within this period of time, the approval is void. New plans and specifications, in accordance with the standards in effect at the time, must be submitted to DEQ for approval. Fees will be reassessed.

Construction Completion Requirements

Before commencing or continuing operation of the PWS, a certified letter must be submitted to DEQ indicating construction was completed in accordance with the plans and specifications approved by DEQ.

Within 90 days of completion of construction, "as-built" drawings must be signed and submitted to DEQ. In addition, DEQ may also require an operations and maintenance manual to accompany the "as-built" drawings.

DEQ may require that performance measures (such as, chemical analyses, microbiological examinations, flow tests, pressure tests, treatment plant performance records, etc.) be conducted to verify that the construction complies with the criteria set in the plans and specifications.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding these requirements, contact the Engineering Services Section of the Public Water Supply Program at 444-4400.

