

Cowlitz County Health Department

Process For Developing A Group B Public Water System From A Well

Step 1: The Coordination Act

The Coordination Act prohibits the development of new, independents systems where an existing system is available to provide service. Determine if there is a near-by public water system that can provide water service. The health department can help with determining if there is a nearby system that can provide service.

Step 2: Type of System

Determine whether the system needs to be approved as a Group B Public Water System or a Group A Public Water System. If there are 15 connections or more, or the water will be accessible to 25 or more people for at least 60 days of the year, the water system would need to be approved as a Group A Water System by the Washington State Department of Health.

Step 3: Water Rights

If the water system will use over 5000gpd of water (or more than six connections), a water right will be needed from the Department of Ecology. The Southwest Regional Office of the Department Of Ecology phone number is (360) 407-6300.

Step 4: Well Site Inspection

An application available on this website needs to be completed and turned in to the Cowlitz County Health Department with the applicable fee. A well site inspection will be made from a representative of the Health Department to determine if the well location is acceptable for Public Water. Public water systems require a 100 Foot Sanitary Control Area with no potential source of contamination in that area. Written notification will be sent to inform you if the site is approvable or if it is not approvable.

Step 5: Water Testing

The well needs to have a complete Inorganic Chemical (IOC) test and a satisfactory bacteria test performed by a Department of Ecology certified drinking water lab, a link to Ecology's lab page is provided on the website. A pump test needs to be performed to determine the quantity of water available from the well. Information regarding IOC tests and correct pump test procedures are available on the webpage in the development section. If treatment other than chlorination, a booster pump or storage is required then the water system will need to be designed by a Professional Engineer and the plans submitted to the Washington State Department of Health. A list of engineers is available from the health department.

Step 6: Water System Design & Plan Submittal

The water system needs to be designed according to the Guideline for Group B Public Water System Approval workbook and its Appendices; copies are available at the Health Department and on this website. Someone should develop the Water System Plan who has previous experience with developing water systems. The Water System Plan needs to be submitted to the Health Department along with the plan review fee. Upon approval of the plans for the water system, a written letter will be sent to you notifying of the approval of the design. A checklist is available on the website to help you with tracking the items that need to be completed.

Step 7: Final Inspection & Approval

The water system needs to then be built according to the approved designs and a construction report will need to be signed verifying the system has been built according to plans. After completion a final inspection needs to be scheduled with the Health Department to verify construction according to the approved plans and the department will then issue final approval for the water system provided it is approvable.

Step 8: Routine Monitoring

After final approval of the system, ongoing sampling is required at a minimum of 1 bacteria sample per year and a nitrate sample every three years to maintain compliance. The Health Department may require increased monitoring.

Step 9: Annual Operating Certificate (See Current Fee Schedule)

An annual operating certificate is required for all group B water systems in Cowlitz County. The annual operating certificate fee may change yearly, please see fee schedule for current amount.

Step 10: Satellite Management Agency (SMA)

All new Group B water systems are required to contract with a Satellite Management Agency to provide ongoing management for the water system. A list of Satellite Management Agencies approved for Cowlitz County is on the webpage in the Development section. Prices and service may vary from SMA to SMA, please contact multiple SMA's to discuss service.