

Water Quality / LOSS Regulatory Info:

Chapter 90.48 RCW, Water pollution control

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=90.48&full=true>

90.48.010 Policy enunciated.

It is declared to be the public policy of the state of Washington to maintain the highest possible standards to insure the purity of all waters of the state consistent with public health and public enjoyment thereof, the propagation and protection of wild life, birds, game, fish and other aquatic life, and the industrial development of the state, and to that end require the use of all known available and reasonable methods by industries and others to prevent and control the pollution of the waters of the state of Washington. Consistent with this policy, the state of Washington will exercise its powers, as fully and as effectively as possible, to retain and secure high quality for all waters of the state. The state of Washington in recognition of the federal government's interest in the quality of the navigable waters of the United States, of which certain portions thereof are within the jurisdictional limits of this state, proclaims a public policy of working cooperatively with the federal government in a joint effort to extinguish the sources of water quality degradation, while at the same time preserving and vigorously exercising state powers to insure that present and future standards of water quality within the state shall be determined by the citizenry, through and by the efforts of state government, of the state of Washington.

90.48.020 Definitions.

Wherever the words "waters of the state" shall be used in this chapter, they shall be construed to include lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, inland waters, underground waters, salt waters and all other surface waters and watercourses within the jurisdiction of the state of Washington.

90.48.030 Jurisdiction of department.

The department shall have the jurisdiction to control and prevent the pollution of streams, lakes, rivers, ponds, inland waters, salt waters, water courses, and other surface and underground waters of the state of Washington.

90.48.080 Discharge of polluting matter in waters prohibited.

It shall be unlawful for any person to throw, drain, run, or otherwise discharge into any of the waters of this state, or to cause, permit or suffer to be thrown, run, drained, allowed to seep or otherwise discharged into such waters any organic or inorganic matter that shall cause or tend to cause pollution of such waters according to the determination of the department, as provided for in this chapter.

90.48.160 Waste disposal permit — Required — Exemptions.

Any person who conducts a commercial or industrial operation of any type which results in the disposal of solid or liquid waste material into the waters of the state, including commercial or industrial operators discharging solid or liquid waste material into sewerage systems operated by municipalities or public entities which discharge into public waters of the state, shall procure a permit from either the department or the *thermal power plant site evaluation council as provided in RCW [90.48.262](#)(2) before disposing of such waste material: PROVIDED, That this section shall not apply to any person discharging domestic sewage only into a sewerage system. The department may, through the adoption of rules, eliminate the permit requirements for disposing of wastes into publicly operated sewerage systems for: (1) Categories of or individual municipalities or public corporations operating sewerage systems; or (2) Any category of waste disposer; if the department determines such permit requirements are no longer necessary for the effective implementation of this chapter. The department may by rule eliminate the permit requirements for disposing of wastes by upland finfish rearing facilities unless a permit is required under the federal clean water act's national pollutant discharge elimination system.

90.48.162 Waste disposal permits required of counties, municipalities and public corporations.

Any county or any municipal or public corporation operating or proposing to operate a sewerage system, including any system which collects only domestic sewerage, which results in the disposal of waste material into the waters of the state shall procure a permit from the department of ecology before so disposing of such materials. This section is intended to extend the permit system of RCW [90.48.160](#) to counties and municipal or public corporations and the provisions of RCW [90.48.170](#) through [90.48.200](#) and 90.52.040 shall be applicable to the permit requirement imposed under this section. A permit under this chapter is not required for large on-site sewage systems permitted by the department of health under chapter 70.118B RCW or for on-site sewage systems permitted by local health jurisdictions under rules of the state board of health.

Chapter 173-200 WAC, Water Quality Standards for Ground Waters of the State of Washington <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/wac173200.pdf>

WAC 173-200-010 Introduction. (1) This chapter implements chapter 90.48 RCW, the Water Pollution Control Act and chapter 90.54 RCW, the Water Resources Act of 1971.

(2) This chapter applies to all ground waters of the state that occur in a saturated zone or stratum beneath the surface of land or below a surface water body.

(3) This chapter shall not apply to:

(a) Contaminant concentrations found in saturated soils where those contaminants are chemicals or nutrients that have been applied at agronomic rates for agricultural purpose if those contaminants will not cause pollution of any ground waters below the root zone.

(b) Contaminant concentrations found in saturated soils where those contaminants are constituents that have been applied at approved rates and under approved methods of land treatment if those contaminants will not cause pollution of any ground waters below the root zone.

(c) Clean up actions approved by the department under the Model Toxics Control Act, chapter 70.105D RCW, or approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq. Ground water cleanup standards for such sites shall be developed under WAC 173-340-720.

(4) The goal of this chapter is to maintain the highest quality of the state's ground waters and protect existing and future beneficial uses of the ground water through the reduction or elimination of the discharge of contaminants to the state's ground waters.

(5) To implement this goal, this chapter establishes ground water quality standards which, together with the state's technology-based treatment requirements, provide for the protection of the environment and human health and protection of existing and future beneficial uses of ground waters.

WAC 173-200-030 Antidegradation policy. (1) The antidegradation policy of the state of Washington, is generally guided by chapter 90.48 RCW, the Water Pollution Control Act, and chapter 90.54 RCW, the Water Resources Act of 1971. The goal of this policy is to ensure the purity of the state's ground waters and to protect the natural environment.

(2) The antidegradation policy is as follows:

(a) Existing and future beneficial uses shall be maintained and protected and degradation of ground water quality that would interfere with or become injurious to beneficial uses shall not be allowed.

- (b) Degradation shall not be allowed of high quality ground waters constituting an outstanding national or state resource, such as waters of national and state parks and wildlife refuges, and waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance.
- (c) Whenever ground waters are of a higher quality than the criteria assigned for said waters, the existing water quality shall be protected, and contaminants that will reduce the existing quality thereof shall not be allowed to enter such waters, except in those instances where it can be demonstrated to the department's satisfaction that:
 - (i) An overriding consideration of the public interest will be served; and
 - (ii) All contaminants proposed for entry into said ground waters shall be provided with all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment prior to entry.

WAC 173-200-050 Enforcement limit. (1) An enforcement limit is a value assigned to any contaminant for the purposes of regulating that contaminant to protect existing ground water quality and to prevent ground water pollution.

(2) Enforcement limits shall be defined on a case-by-case basis and shall be met at the point of compliance as defined in WAC 173-200-060. When the point of compliance is established at or in close proximity to the property boundary, enforcement limits shall be established sufficiently below criteria to provide an adequate margin of safety to ensure pollution does not extend beyond the property boundary.

(3) All enforcement limits shall, at a minimum, be based on all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment.

(a) The department shall consider all of the following in establishing enforcement limits:

- (i) The antidegradation policy;
- (ii) Establishment of an enforcement limit as near the natural ground water quality as practical;
- (iii) Overall protection of human health and the environment;
- (iv) Whether the potentially affected area has been designated as a special protection area;
- (v) Protection of existing and future beneficial uses;
- (vi) Effects of the presence of multiple chemicals, multiple exposure pathways in accordance with subsection (5) of this section, and toxicity of individual contaminants;
- (vii) Federal, state, tribal, and local land use plans, policies, or ordinances including wellhead protection programs;
- (viii) Pollution of other media such as soils or surface waters; and
- (ix) Any other considerations the department deems pertinent to achieve the objectives of this chapter.

(b) Where a criterion is established for a given contaminant, the enforcement limit shall not exceed the criterion except as follows:

- (i) When the natural ground water quality for a contaminant exceeds the criterion, the enforcement limit for that contaminant shall be equal to the natural level.
- (ii) When the background ground water quality exceeds a criterion, the enforcement limit at the point of compliance shall not exceed the background ground water quality for that criterion. Enforcement limits based on elevated background ground water quality shall in no way be construed to allow continued pollution of the receiving ground water.

(iii) When a criterion is less than the practical quantification level, the enforcement limit shall be established in an alternate location to provide a realistic estimate that the criterion shall not be exceeded in the ground water. Evaluation for such enforcement limits shall be performed in accordance with WAC 173-200-080(5).

WAC 173-200-060 Point of compliance. (1) The point of compliance is the location where the enforcement limit, set in accordance with WAC 173-200-050, shall be measured and shall not be exceeded.

(a) The department shall establish the point of compliance for an activity. The point of compliance shall be established in the ground water as near the source as technically, hydrogeologically, and geographically feasible.

(b) Compliance with the enforcement limits shall be maintained throughout the site from the uppermost level of the saturated zone extending vertically to the lowest depth that could potentially be affected by an activity.

(2) An alternative point of compliance, established at a location some distance from the source up to but not exceeding the property boundary, may be approved by the department as follows:

(a) An alternative point of compliance may be approved in the following situations:

(i) When all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment result in an exceedance of the criteria at the point of compliance.

(ii) When a point of compliance is defined in another state administrative rule including, but not limited to, Minimum functional standards for solid waste handling (chapter 173-304 WAC), Dangerous waste regulations (chapter 173-303 WAC), and Uranium and/or thorium mill operation and stabilization of mill tailing piles (chapter 402-52 WAC).

(b) In determining an alternative point of compliance, the department shall consider, at a minimum, the following factors:

(i) Effectiveness of all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment;

(ii) The contaminant volume, type, mobility, and characteristics;

(iii) Design and life span of the activity;

(iv) Existing and anticipated land and ground water uses; and

(v) Remedial options if an enforcement level is exceeded at the point of compliance.

(3) The department recognizes that evaluation of the impact of an activity at the designated point of compliance may be impractical, and the department may allow evaluation of that activity at some other point, in accordance with WAC 173-200-100 and 173-200-080(5).

WAC 173-200-080 Evaluation. (1) The purpose of this section is to establish minimum requirements for evaluating the impacts of an activity on the ground water quality to determine compliance with this chapter.

(2) If the department determines a potential to pollute the ground water exists, the department shall request a permit holder or responsible person to prepare and submit for departmental approval a ground water quality evaluation program for its activity. Each evaluation program shall be based on soil and hydrogeologic characteristics and be capable of assessing impacts on ground water at the point of compliance.

(3) A ground water evaluation program approved by the department may include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- (a) Ground water monitoring for a specific activity;
- (b) Ground water monitoring at selected sites for a group of activities;
- (c) Monitoring of the vadose zone;
- (d) Evaluation and monitoring of effluent quality;
- (e) Evaluation within a treatment process;
- (f) Evaluation of management practices.

(4) In the evaluation program the permit holder or responsible person shall include information on the following:

- (a) The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of the contaminants;
- (b) The availability and adequacy of analytical methods;
- (c) The complexity and capability of assessing the hydrogeologic system;
- (d) The reliability of all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment;
- (e) The location of the point or points of compliance or alternative point of compliance; and
- (f) Such other information that the department deems necessary to achieve the objectives of this chapter.

(5) When it is impractical to evaluate the impact of an activity at the designated point of compliance, for example when a criterion is less than the practical quantification limit, evaluation shall be designed and performed at an alternate location to provide a realistic estimate of conditions in the ground water at a point of compliance.

(6) These evaluation requirements pertain to activities that are not already covered by state regulation which have specific monitoring requirements such as chapter 173-303 WAC, Dangerous waste regulations, chapter 173-304 WAC, Minimum functional standards for solid waste handling, and chapter 402-52 WAC, Uranium and/or thorium mill operation and stabilization of mill tailing piles.

(7) For those activities for which the department has not issued permits and that have the potential to pollute the groundwater, evaluation shall be conducted according to the following:

- (a) Evaluation procedures shall be included in department guidelines, policies, and best management practices to ensure that an adequate determination of compliance with this chapter can be made;
- (b) For those activities regulated by other agencies but not regulated by department rule, the department will pursue evaluation of the activity through a memorandum of understanding with the regulating agency.

WAC 173-200-100 Implementation and enforcement. (1) The requirements of this chapter shall be met for all ground waters to meet the requirements of this chapter at all places and at all times.

(2) No person shall engage in any activity that violates or causes the violation of this chapter.

(3) This chapter shall be enforced through all legal, equitable, and other methods available to the department including, but not limited to: Issuance of state waste discharge permits, other departmental permits, regulatory orders, court actions, review

and approval of plans and specifications, evaluation of compliance with all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment of a waste prior to discharge, and pursuit of memoranda of understanding between the department and other regulatory agencies.

(4) Permits issued or reissued by the department shall be conditioned in such a manner as to authorize only activities that will not cause violations of this chapter.

(a) Any applicant for any departmental permit shall evaluate the potential impact of its proposed activity on the ground water quality.

(b) For reissued permits, the permit holder shall evaluate the impacts of its activities on ground water quality, and, if necessary to achieve compliance with ground water quality enforcement limits, determine a department approved schedule of compliance.

(5) For permit holders in compliance with the terms and conditions of a department permit and whose activity violates this chapter, the department is electing, from among the enforcement mechanisms available to it for the enforcement of WAC 173-200-040 and 173-200-050, to precede any civil or criminal penalty with a compliance order or permit modification.

(6) The department shall pursue memoranda of understanding with other state agencies to develop policies and rules that will require all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment to achieve compliance with this chapter.

Departmental orders, memoranda of understanding, and best management practices shall be modified by the department whenever an activity authorized by such orders or BMPs or pursuant to such memoranda of understanding violates this chapter.

(7) The department shall pursue memoranda of understanding with other state agencies, federal agencies, and tribal authorities to coordinate ground water management activities.

(8) For persons whose activity violates this chapter but is in compliance with best management practices adopted by rule in chapter 248-96 WAC, WAC 173-304-300(4), RCW 15.58.150 (2)(c), WAC 16-228-180(1), or 16-228-185, the department is electing, from among the enforcement mechanisms available to it for the enforcement of WAC 173-200-040 and 173-200-050, to precede any civil or criminal penalty with a compliance order.

(9) When a distinction cannot be made among ground water, surface water, or sediments the applicable standard shall depend on which beneficial use is or could be adversely affected. If beneficial uses of more than one resource are affected, the most restrictive standard shall apply.

(10) The department shall give due consideration to the precision and accuracy of sampling and analytical methods used when determining compliance with this chapter.

(11) The analytical testing methods for determining compliance with this chapter shall be approved in writing by the department prior to the performance of analyses.