

# Safe Drinking Water Act 2011 - Fact sheet

## Water Carting

Bulk carting of drinking water is an important service to the community and water delivered must be fit for human consumption. Drinking water carters are subject to the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2011* which provides direction on how to ensure that water is safe.

### Background

Drinking water carting was previously regulated by the *Food Act 2001* which included the general requirement that drinking water provided to customers is safe to drink. The Food Act did not provide specific guidance on how to achieve safety and this is now addressed in the Act.

The Act is underpinned by the [Australian Drinking Water Guidelines](#) (ADWG) which recommend that the most effective way of ensuring safe drinking water is through the use of a risk management plan (RMP).

The Act does not apply to water being transported to a commercial bottling facility. Bottled water continues to be regulated by the Food Act.

### Requirements of the Act

Under the Act your business is required to:

- > Register with the Department for Health and Ageing (DHA) as a drinking water provider
- > Develop and use a RMP that includes a water quality monitoring program and incident protocol
- > Have an inspection every two years by an approved inspector
- > Submit water quality and inspection reports to DHA
- > Provide water quality results to your customers if requested.

### Registration

Anyone who collects, stores and provides drinking water in *bulk* to customers must register with DHA. Under the Act bulk water is defined as any volume greater than 100L. Registration as a water provider replaces the requirement to notify your local authority that you are operating as a

food business under the Food Act.

If your water carting business supplies drinking water from SA Water supplies or another registered drinking water provider it still needs to be registered.

Registration is free and registration forms are available from the water quality unit or the website listed at the end of this form. Water providers are only required to register once. Water providers must not supply drinking water unless they are registered.

### Risk Management Plans

A drinking water RMP is a document that identifies the key risks involved with the supply of drinking water and provides solutions for managing the risks.

Businesses can use a standard RMP or produce their own. Templates for a standard RMP are available at [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract). The standard template includes approved monitoring plans and incident protocols. If a standard plan is used DHA must be notified that the monitoring and incident components have been adopted.

If a non-standard RMP is used this must be submitted to DHA for approval. Variations to the standard plans and protocols also need to be submitted for approval. There are a range of tools that providers can use to develop RMPs and these include:

- > The [ADWG](#)
- > The [Community Water Planner](#)
- > A guidance document being developed by SA Health which will be accessible on the [Safe Drinking Water Act website](#)



## Source of water

The source of water to be carted must be of drinking water quality and it is the responsibility of the carter to ensure that it is safe to use. Developing a RMP will assist in this.

### Mains water

Where mains water produced by another drinking water provider (eg SA Water) the provider should be consulted about appropriate abstraction points, the quality of the water and the type of disinfection used (chlorination or chloramination).

### Bore (ground) water

Bore water from a deep bore (50 metres or more) with an intact casing and a well-head protected from contamination by surface run-off should be microbiologically safe for use and chemical quality should be relatively stable.

However in many cases bore water will be pumped to a storage tank which will then be used as the source of the water. The storage tank provides a potential source for microbiological contamination and therefore it is important that the integrity of the tank should be checked.

Testing of chemical parameters in bore water should be repeated annually. Water should be tested for fluoride, arsenic and health related metals (antimony, barium, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, silver, uranium). Testing for microbiological quality (*E.coli* or thermotolerant coliforms) should be initially performed every 3 months. Further advice on testing frequencies can be obtained from the Water Quality Unit on 8266 7100.

Additional testing should be undertaken after any change in the water supply (such as the addition of a water storage tank) that may impact on water quality. Samples for testing should be collected at the point of abstraction for water carting.

Groundwater that is suspected to be subject to contamination from other sources (such as landfill, industrial or human wastes) should not be used or

should be tested for a wider range of chemicals prior to use.

Shallow, unconfined aquifers are not protected by thick layers of soils and clays and are susceptible to both chemical and microbiological contamination. Bore water from shallow, unconfined aquifers is generally not recommended as a suitable source of drinking water, particularly in urban areas.

### Surface water

Untreated surface water is not suitable for carting. Please liaise with the Water Quality Unit for further advice re treatment requirements and testing.

### Rain water

Rainwater collected from roof catchments is suitable for use provided that it comes from a well-maintained system. Further information about rainwater may be found in the [Guidance on use of rainwater tanks](#) document.

## Inspections and reporting of results

An essential feature of the Act is that the application of key features is checked. This is achieved via routine inspections which will determine if a RMP is in place and being implemented. This may include the inspector examining documentation related to the RMP and an inspection of water carting equipment. It is the responsibility of the drinking water provider to organise the inspection as required. A list of inspectors will be maintained on the [Safe Drinking Water Act website](#).

All drinking water results from approved monitoring plans will need to be reported to DHA. This can be achieved by including results with inspection reports.

## Water quality testing and choice of laboratories

The frequency of testing will be determined in the RMP and when results are received these should be compared with guideline values in the ADWG. These values will be referenced in the incident protocol. Advice for the



interpretation of results can be obtained from the Water Quality Unit.

Water quality testing must be performed by a NATA accredited analytical laboratory or by a laboratory approved under the Act. Contact details for laboratories can also be found under "Analysts" in the Yellow Pages®. Advice should always be sought from the laboratory regarding the appropriate way to collect a sample.

### **Tankers used for carting drinking water**

Tankers or bulk water containers used for carting drinking water should not be used for any other purpose.

All tankers used for carting drinking water should be fit for the purpose and tankers that incorporate materials in the tank itself or in hoses or associated fittings that may taint or contaminate carted water are not to be used. Materials that are food grade or that comply with Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4020 "Testing of products for use in contact with drinking water" should be used.

Water tankers including hoses, pumps and associated fittings are to be kept clean and in sound condition.

### **Disinfection**

All water supplied for drinking should be disinfected at the point of supply to the receiving premises. This provides protection against contamination introduced during filling of the water tanker and during transport to the point of supply.

### **Work Health and Safety**

Water carters should be aware of requirements and obligations pursuant to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA). Care should be taken in handling or storing

chlorine and it is important to carefully read and follow safety directions given on the package label. Protective gloves and safety glasses should be worn. If chlorine solution is splashed onto the skin the area affected should be washed immediately with water.

Only a minimum amount of chlorine should be carried in the vehicle and it is recommended that measured doses of chlorine should be dispensed in containers prior to delivery.

### **Incidents and incident notification**

The aim of drinking water providers is to produce safe drinking water all of the time without any faults occurring. Safe Drinking water is water that complies with requirements set in the incident protocol of the RMP. However, the reality is that incidents happen and many are predictable. In most cases prompt action can prevent incidents causing significant risks to public health. Incidents can include events such as animals entering storage tanks or interruptions to disinfection.

### **Record Keeping**

The results of all tests performed to establish the suitability of carted water for drinking, as well as other RMP documentation such as tanker maintenance, should be kept in a central record. In addition a delivery log book is to be kept by the water carter.

Records, log books and all documentation relating to the RMP should be available and provided on request for examination by an authorised officer.

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## **For more information**

**Water Quality Unit  
Public Health  
SA Health  
Telephone: 8226 7100  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract)**

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