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Group B Water System Certificate of Water Availability – Guidance Document

Introduction

This guide is for Group B water system owners or users who are being asked to sign a Certificate of Water Availability in support of an on-site sewage system or building permit application.

What is a Group B water system?

Group B drinking water systems serve fewer than 15 service connections and fewer than 25 people per day - See WAC 246-291-005 for a detailed definition.

What is a Group B Certificate of Water Availability (Group B CWA)?

A Group B CWA is a form confirming a water system can supply water to a property or project. It acknowledges that the water system has an approved design and that the parcel to be served is included in the approved design.

Who should sign a Certificate of Water Availability?

A Group B CWA is signed by the water purveyor or authorized representative.

A water purveyor is an individual who owns and operates a water system. See, defined by WAC 246-291-010(52) for a detailed definition.

A community, under an association, co-op, mutual company, or other partnership, who owns and operates a water system can also be considered a water purveyor. Governance is typically defined in Articles of Incorporation or a Water Use Agreement.

Water system purveyors employing a Satellite Management Agency (SMA) to help manage their water system, may delegate the SMA as an authorized representative to sign the Group B CWA.

Guidance

Know Before Signing

Make sure that what you are signing the Group B CWA form is accurate. If a Group B CWA form is signed using inaccurate or falsified information, it could result in civil legal issues for the purveyor when permits are denied or approved based in inaccurate or falsified information.

Review Your Water System Records

Savvy purveyors will have access to comprehensive water system records including the water system design plans, approval letters, water quality testing history, and records or receipts from water professionals who have worked on this system.

If you don't have access to your Group B water system's records, you may have luck finding them on one or a combination of the following resources:

- Check with the Group B water system developer or original home builder.
- Check with other water system users or previous owners.
- Check the [King County Septic and Group B Records Instant App](#).
- Check [Sentry Internet | Washington State Department of Health](#). Use your Washington State DOH Water System ID# to look up basic water system information.
- Check [Landmark Web Home Page](#). Landmark Web is the search portal for officially recorded documents in King County. It may be useful for looking at things like Water Use Agreements, covenants, easements, and notices on title. Older documents may not have digital copies, you might need to reach out to the recorder's office directly for copies.
- Check the [Well Report Search Options](#) – The Washington State Department of Ecology's Well Report Search can be used to find well logs.
- Check [DOH Public Records](#) – Water systems were approved by King County until about 2011. If your water system was created in 2011 or later reach out to DOH and submit a public records request for the approved documents.

If you have no record of your Group B approved water system design, DO NOT SIGN the Group B CWA. Please contact a licensed professional engineer, experienced in water system design, to submit a Group B Design to DOH for review and approval. [Group B Public Water Systems—Design | Washington State Department of Health](#).

Understanding the Water System Approval Documents

- An approved water system design should define:
 - Properties to be served and type of use
 - Water use assumptions (e.g. residential use)
 - Well and pumping capacities to meet minimum volume and pressure requirements
 - Water quality results that meet standards in place
 - Water Use Agreement
- Verify that the proposed connection does not exceed the total number of approved connections or gives away a connection to a property outside the scope of the approved design.
- Under Chapter 246-291 WAC, an ADU is considered a standalone connection for a Group B water system. A Group B CWA request for an ADU should only be signed if the ADU was specifically identified in the approved Group B water system design or a revision has been completed by a Washington State Licensed Engineer who specializes in Water System designs.

If you are unsure about which properties were included in your Group B water system's previously approved designs and how many connections each property gets, hire a professional engineer specializing in small water systems or an SMA to help you review your water system records.

If you find that the proposed project outlined in the CWA will take your Group B water system beyond the water system's number of total approved connections, or would go beyond the design assumptions of the system, hire a professional engineer to make a new Group B design and have them submit it to the Washington State Department of Health for review and approval.

Summary

A Group B Certificate of Water Availability is an official form that governmental permitting departments use when checking to see if a property or project has access to an approved Group B water source.

Group B water systems that were previously approved by Public Health – Seattle & King County or Washington State Department of Health are considered an approved water source if they are safe, reliable, and operate consistently with their previously approved design.

The Group B CWA should be filled out by a Group B purveyor or authorized representative such as an SMA. The purveyor should make sure that what they are signing on to the Group B CWA is accurate, because inaccurate information could result in civil legal issues and the purveyor liable for denied or illegally approved permits.

Purveyors can make sure what they are stating on the Group B CWA is true by reviewing their water system records to check that the water system is operating consistently with their previously approved designs and make sure there are no outstanding water quality or water production issues.

If there are known or suspected water quality, water production, or mechanical issues or if the new requested use does not match the previously approved design, purveyors should work with licensed professionals to get the water system fully approved and operating safely and reliably before signing the Group B CWA.