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Public Health – Seattle & King County Environmental Health Division (PHSKC)
Group B Water Systems – Certificate of Water Availability
Memorandum

Effective Date: 5/22/2026

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Subject: Group B Water Systems – Certificate of Water Availability

1. Summary and Purpose

This memo provides guidance on Public Health – Seattle & King County’s (PHSKC) role determining a Group B water system’s compliance status when reviewing Land Use Application such as OSS Site Design, Significant Building Remodel, Boundary Line Adjustment, or Preliminary or Final Subdivision/Short plat. If that site is located in a public water service area or connected to a Group B public water system, the applicant must submit a Certificate of Water Availability (CWA) to demonstrate an adequate public water supply to support the development or remodel in King County.

2. Regulatory Background

Per [King County Board of Health On-site Sewage Title 13](#), section 13.04.070(A), “No on-site sewage system may be constructed or expanded if the plumbing fixtures draining to the system are not supplied with water from an approved source.

An “approved source” consists of one of the following:

- A public water source currently in compliance with chapter [246-290 WAC](#) (Group A public water systems) or [246-291 WAC](#) (Group B public water systems) and [King County Board of Health Title 12 - Water.](#)”
- A private individual well source.
- An alternative water source, when there is demonstrated proof of Hardship.

Group A drinking water systems.

- Group A drinking water systems serve 15 or more service connections or at least 25 people per day – see 246-290-020 WAC for a detailed definition.
- Group A water systems are regulated by the Washington State Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water (DOH) under Chapter 246-290 WAC, including design approval and on-going compliance monitoring.
- DOH issues Group A water systems an operating permit per [246-294 WAC](#) to describe the water system’s on-going compliance status.
- A water system “currently in compliance with chapter 246-290” is demonstrated by a CWA signed by the water system owner / purveyor. The CWA acknowledges that the proposed

development is considered within the assumptions described in the approved engineering design of the water system.

Group B drinking water systems.

- Group B drinking water systems serve fewer than 15 service connections and fewer than 25 people per day – See 246-291 WAC for a detailed definition.
- Group B drinking water systems are regulated by DOH under Chapter 246-291 WAC.
- King County Board of Health Title 12.04.030 gives authority to PHSKC to regulate Group B drinking water systems through a Water System Plan of Operation.
- In 2011 the King County Water System Plan of Operation with DOH expired and a new plan was not signed. **PHSKC is no longer able to review and approve new Group B water system designs.**
- In 2014 DOH wrote and the State Board of Health adopted amendments to Chapter 246-291 WAC which ended ongoing compliance monitoring requirements for Group B water systems. In effect, Group B oversight was diminished to a one-time design approval.
- PHSKC does not have an independent funding mechanism for a Group B Drinking Water Program. PHSKC is no longer able to do a detailed assessment of existing water systems as described in 12.08.110.

3. Guidance

When submitting applications to use a Group B water system as the approved water source, the applicant shall submit to PHSKC for review:

- **A Group B Certificate of Water Availability (Group B – CWA)** signed by the Group B water system's current purveyor. [Reference Group B Water System Certificate of Water Availability – Guidance Document]. The purveyor **MUST USE THE Group B Certificate of Water Availability form – NOT the CWA designed for a Group A water system.**
- Documentation of the approved Group B water system design workbook. Including:
 - A copy of the DOH or PHSKC approval letter
 - A copy of the approved Group B water system design workbook (if available)
 - A copy of the DOH or PHSKC Construction Completion Report (if applicable)
 - A list of the properties with a legal connection, the parcels that are currently connected, and the number of shares allocated to each parcel.
 - A copy of the approved drawing showing the water service lines
 - If the water system was conditionally approved, verify that conditions have been met (specifically around water rights)
 - Well Use Agreement (if available)
- Recent water quality documentation from the Group B system showing:
 - Satisfactory coliform bacteria test results within the last year.
 - Satisfactory nitrate test results within the last 3 years (MCL 10 mg/L)

- Satisfactory arsenic test results within the last 3 years (MCL 0.010 mg/L) [Arsenic and Your Private Well | Washington State Department of Health](#).
- Copy of public notification (if applicable)
 - For Group B systems constructed prior to January 1, 2014, the arsenic MCL was 0.05 mg/L.
 - WAC 246-291-360 (3) and (4) establish public notification requirements for Group B systems constructed prior to January 1, 2014, with an arsenic concentration exceeding 0.010 mg/L.
- **Satellite Management Agency Requirements**
 - Please refer to [Final Bill Report HB 1947](#) to determine if an SMA is required. If it is required, proof of the SMA Contract is required to be submitted.

Through the issuance of the Group B CWA, the purveyor is attesting that the water system is able to provide safe and reliable potable water to the proposed development per the original approved water system design..

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](#).

NOTE: It is the responsibility of applicants to correctly identify all wellhead protection areas on septic system applications for the subject property and adjacent parcels.