EPD Watershed Protection Branch

Notice of Second Stakeholder Meeting regarding Proposed Updates to the Rules for Safe Drinking Water, Rule 391-3-5-.07, and Proposed Updates to Georgia's Minimum Standards for Public Water Systems

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Watershed Protection Branch will hold a second virtual stakeholder meeting to discuss variance procedures for locating a drinking water well within 100 feet of a surface water. The meeting will be held on **Monday, April 21, 2025 beginning at 10:00 am** on the Zoom web conferencing platform. EPD will be hosting this meeting, and the login information is below.

The current Rules for Safe Drinking Water and the Minimum Standards for Public Water Systems (revised March 2021) do not allow for a drinking water well to be located within 100 feet of a surface water. This is currently specified in **Section 5.2.4 of the Minimum Standards** for Public Water Systems (revised March 2021) and in the Rules for Safe Drinking Water, Chapter 391-3-5, **Rule 391-3-5-.07(3)**. EPD previously held a stakeholder meeting to discuss draft proposed updates to Rule 391-3-5-.07 and the Minimum Standards on December 18, 2024. Based on input received during that meeting and written comments received through the prior comment deadline, EPD has prepared updated draft proposed amendments to Rule 391-3-5-.07 and the Minimum Standards for additional stakeholder review and input, and those are provided for review below. The proposed updates to the Minimum Standards also incorporate two other sections (10.17 and 12.9) that were not changed from the prior public notice period. Information concerning the proposed updates to the rule and Minimum Standards is also available on this webpage:
https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch/drinking-water

The purpose of this meeting is to inform and solicit input from the public and interested stakeholders regarding proposed changes to the rules and Minimum Standards regarding wells located within 100 feet of a surface water, as well as two other proposed changes to the Minimum Standards. EPD will also listen to comments and address stakeholder questions during the meeting.

Zoom Meeting Details:

Monday, April 21, 2025, beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Link to join:

https://gaepd.zoom.us/j/91039744928?pwd=3K2mFU59Abfq6CPn9jHcmx9ZZCgSay.1

Meeting ID: 910 3974 4928
Passcode: 569728

Those joining via computer can use their computer audio, or may also dial-in.
Dial-in number: 1-470-381-2552 (with same Meeting ID as above)

At the stakeholder meeting, anyone may present data, make a statement, or offer comments either orally or in writing. Lengthy statements or statements of a considerable technical or economic nature, as well as previously recorded messages, should be submitted in writing.

Written comments are also welcomed and should be received by close of business on **Friday, April 25, 2025**. Written comments may be emailed to EPDComments@dnr.ga.gov. Please include the words “Drinking Water Program Updates” in the subject line to help ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the correct staff. General questions may also be directed to Mr. Manny Patel of the Watershed Protection Branch at manny.patel@dnr.ga.gov or (470) 524-0585.

Rule 391-3-5-.07 Wells

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(3) **Protection from Contamination**. Each well must be protected from contamination by surface waters and other sources of contamination. The location of wells must be in compliance with the latest edition of the Division's "Minimum Standards for Public Water Systems."

(a) A public water system that is requesting to locate a new well within 100 feet of surface water (perennial streams, lakes, ponds and reservoirs) must submit a hydrologic assessment report prepared by a Georgia Registered Professional Geologist that includes the following:

1. Well characteristics: well depth, screened or perforated interval (if present), open interval (if present), casing seal placement, well data sheet and location of nearby wells;

2. Data from 24-hour pump test: Measurement of temperature, pH, and either total dissolved solids or conductivity measured every 4 hours for both the pumped groundwater and the nearest surface water source; and

3. Test Result: Collect and analyze a water sample collected after a 24-hour pump test for Giardia Lamblia, Cryptosporidium, total coliform, turbidity and Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC).

(b) An approval may be provided for the new source to be treated as a ground water source if, based on the hydrologic assessment, the Division determines that direct surface water influence is not likely and test results meet all of the following conditions:

1. There is no presence of Giardia Lamblia, Total Coliform or Cryptosporidium in the sampled water;

2. HPC in the sampled water is less than 500; and

3. Turbidity of the sampled water is less than 2 NTU.

(c) A water system may choose to conduct additional Microscopic Particle Analysis to support the data that the groundwater is not under the direct influence of surface water by following the steps outlined in sub-paragraphs 3(d) through 3(g).

(d) Collect a minimum of one sample according to the "Consensus Method for Determining Groundwaters under the Direct Influence of Surface Water Using Microscopic Particulate Analysis (MPA)."

(e) Samples must be collected during a period of high runoff or streamflow, after a rainfall event, or at other times as determined by the Division.

(f) All wells must be pumping constantly for at least 48 hours prior to acquiring a sample for MPA.

(g) The result of the MPA testing shall be submitted to the Division's Drinking Water Program and must be accompanied by an explanation from the laboratory as to the score the results warrant per EPA's risk rating scale outlined in Table 1 and Table 2 of the "Consensus Method for Determining Groundwaters under the Direct Influence of Surface Water Using Microscopic Particulate Analysis (MPA)."

(h) An approval may be provided for the new source to be treated as a surface water source and subject to the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) if, based on the hydrologic assessment, the Division determines that direct surface water influence is likely and test results indicate any of the following conditions:

1. MPA risk rating score(s) are greater than 9 points for the samples collected in accordance with sub-paragraphs 3(d) through 3(g);

2. There is presence of Giardia Lamblia, Total Coliform or Cryptosporidium in the sampled water;

3. HPC in the sampled water is greater than 500; or

4. Turbidity of the sampled water is greater than 5 NTU.

(i) Source(s) that are approved pursuant to sub-paragraph 3(b) as a groundwater source shall conduct an additional MPA analysis 12 months after the well is brought into production in accordance with sub-paragraphs 3(d) through 3(g). For source(s) that are approved pursuant to sub-paragraph (3)(b) and located in a Karst formation, additional MPA analyses shall be conducted annually after the well is brought into production in accordance with sub-paragraphs 3(d) through 3(g).

(4) **Fill, Plug and Seal**. Whenever a bore hole of any depth is excavated for, but not used as a source of water supply it shall be the supplier's responsibility to fill, plug and seal the hole within thirty (30) days of the excavation in a manner approved by the Division to restore as nearly as possible the natural earth condition existing before the hole was excavated and to protect against contamination of the ground water. This paragraph shall not apply where some other use is made of the ground water from the well hole.

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5.2.4 WELL LOCATIONS:

Wells shall be located:

a. generally, at the highest point, and as far removed, and in a direction opposite to the ground water flow from any known or probable source of contamination;

b. not less than fifty (50) feet from a septic tank;

c. not less than one hundred (100) feet away from a septic tank absorption field;

d. not less than ten (10) feet away from a sewer;

e. not less than one thousand (1,000) feet away from a solid waste disposal site and not in a direction where ground water flow from the site may be intercepted by the well;

f. as far removed as possible from all open abandoned wells;

g. not in areas of sink holes;

h. not in the flood plain areas, unless adequate protection is provided to prevent submergence of the well casing, pumps and appurtenances;

i. not less than 100 feet from surface water~~;~~, or within 100 feet of surface water in accordance with Rule 391-3-5-.07(3);

j. not less than 50 feet from buildings, mobile homes and permanent structures;

k. not less than 100 feet from animal houses or lots, or cultivated areas to which chemicals are applied;

l. not less than 100 feet from a chemical or petroleum fuel underground storage tank with secondary containment;

m. not less than 50 feet away from storm water drainage ditch that contains water during and shortly after a rain event;

n. the Division may require greater separation distances or impose other protective measures when necessary to protect the well from any potential source of pollution, based upon: the hazard or health risk associated with the source of pollution; the proximity of the potential source to the well; the type of material; facility or circumstance that poses the source or potential source of pollution; the volume or size of the source or potential source of pollution; hydrogeological features of the site which could affect the movement of contaminants to the source water; the effect which well operation might have on the movement of contamination; the feasibility of providing additional separation distances or protective measures; and

o. continued sanitary protection of the well site from potential sources of contamination shall be provided either through ownership, restrictive use zoning, easements or other means acceptable to the Division.

10.6 ACCESS

a. Finished water storage structures shall be designed with reasonably convenient access to the interior for cleaning and maintenance.

b. Manholes above the waterline:

1. At least two manholes should be provided.

2. On elevated storage or ~~doom~~ dome roof structures, at least one of the access manholes shall be framed at least 4 inches, and preferably 6 inches, above the surface of the roof at the opening.

3. On ground-level structures, manholes should be elevated 24 to 36 inches above the top or covering sod;

4. shall be fitted with a solid watertight cover which overlaps the framed opening and extends down around the frame at least 2 inches;

5. should be hinged at one side;

6. shall have a locking device; and

7. shall be a minimum of 20 inches in diameter or equivalent.

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10.17 SAMPLING

A ~~suitable~~smooth-noosed sampling tap should be provided on all storage structures and be protected from public access. Smooth-nosed sampling tap(s) shall be provided to facilitate collection of water samples for both bacteriological and chemical analyses. The sample tap(s) shall be easily accessible.

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12.9 WATER SERVICES AND PLUMBING

a. Water services and plumbing should conform to relevant local and/or state plumbing codes, or to the Standard Plumbing Code, as applicable within the jurisdiction in which the system is located.

b. The product that is used for the service line must be listed as being certified for conformance with the NSF Standard 61.

c. All new ~~and existing~~ services connected to community and non-transient noncommunity water systems shall be individually metered.

d. Individual booster pump(s) shall not be allowed for any individual residential service from the public water supply mains. Where permitted for other types of services, booster pumps shall be designed in accordance with AWWA standards.