

EPD Watershed Protection Branch

Notice of 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 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 **Wednesday, December 18, 2024 beginning at 2:00 pm** on the Zoom web conferencing platform. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division will be hosting this meeting, and the login information for the meeting 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 has prepared draft proposed updates to Rule 391-3-5-.07 and the Minimum Standards for stakeholder review and input, and those are provided below. The proposed updates to the Minimum Standards also incorporates two other sections (10.17 and 12.9). The Minimum Standards are 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. A copy of these items may also be requested by contacting Mr. Manny Patel of the Watershed Protection Branch at manny.patel@dnr.ga.gov or (470) 524-0585.

Zoom Meeting Details:

December 18, 2024, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Link to join:

<https://gaepd.zoom.us/j/93337454748?pwd=b03tcdqR9X8mqOOu88JqQHq7glPAn9.1>

Meeting ID: 933 3745 4748

Passcode: 371541

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, December 27, 2024**. 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.

DRAFT RULE AMENDMENTS FOR STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION

Rule 391-3-5-.07 Wells (Amended)

(1) **Approval.** No person shall construct a well as a source of water supply for a public water system without having first obtained approval from the Division. This requirement may be waived by the Director during emergency situations. Any well that is constructed and does not meet the rules of this Chapter shall not later be used as a drinking water source for a public water system.

(2) **Prohibited Wells.** Dug, bored, or jetted wells are prohibited for all new public water systems.

(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 systems that is requesting to locate a well within 100 feet of a surface water must complete an evaluation, including:
1. Submit results of a hydrogeologic assessment completed by a Georgia registered geologist. The assessment must include the following:
 - (i) Well characteristics: well depth, screened or perforated interval, casing seal placement;
 - (ii) Aquifer characteristics: thickness of the vadose zone, hydraulic conductivity (meaning the capacity of the medium, for example, soil, aquifer, or any hydrogeological unit of interest, to transmit water) of the vadose zone and the aquifer, presence of low permeability zones in the vadose zone, degree of connection between the aquifer and surface water;
 - (iii) Hydraulic gradient: gradient between the aquifer and surface water source during pumping conditions, variation of static water level and surface water level with time; and
 - (iv) Groundwater flow: flow of water from the surface water source to the groundwater source during pumping conditions, estimated Time of Travel

(TOT) for groundwater from the surface water source(s) to the well(s), spring(s), etc.

2. Collect a minimum of two samples according to the "Consensus Method for Determining Groundwaters under the Direct Influence of Surface Water Using Microscopic Particulate Analysis (MPA)."
3. Samples will be collected twice during a twelve-month period: once between August 15 and October 15 (fall) and again between April 1 and May 30 (spring) or at other times as determined by the EPD. Both water samples must be collected during a period of high runoff or streamflow.
4. Well(s) that are proposed to be located in a flood zone shall also test during an annual flood event during which their system is inundated, in addition to the initial fall and spring sampling periods, unless the times are synonymous.
5. All wells must be pumping constantly or cycled on and off on a regular basis for at least two weeks prior to acquiring a sample for MPA.
6. The sampling period is 24 hours. The flow-limiting device on the sampling apparatus should be calibrated to allow one gallon per minute through the system. It is important that 1,400-1,500 gallons of water pass through the filter during the 24-hour sampling period. The minimum amount of water that can be used is 500 gallons.
7. In addition to MPA analysis, the water sample collected in accordance with subparagraphs (a)2. through (a)6. of this rule shall also be tested for Giardia Lamblia, Cryptosporidium, turbidity and Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC).
8. The result of the testing shall be submitted to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Drinking Water Program, Source Water Assessment Unit, and must be accompanied by an explanation from the laboratory as to the score the results warrant per the 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)."
9. An approval may be provided for the Well(s) to be treated as a ground water if, based on the hydrologic assessment, the Director determines that direct surface water influence is not likely and test results meet all the following conditions:
 - (i) MPAs score is fewer than 8 points for the samples collected in accordance with Condition 2 through 6 of this rule,
 - (ii) There is no presence of Giardia Lamblia or Cryptosporidium in the sampled water,
 - (iii) HPC in the sampled water is less than 500, and
 - (iv) Turbidity of the sampled water is less than 1 NTU.

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

- (i) MPAs score is greater than 8 points for the samples collected in accordance with Condition (a) 2 through (a) 6 of this rule,
- (ii) There is presence of Giardia Lamblia or Cryptosporidium in the samples water,
- (iii) HPC in the sampled water is greater than 500, or
- (iv) Turbidity of the sample water is greater than 1 NTU.

11. Well(s) that are approved pursuant to subparagraph (a)9. of this rule and as such treated as groundwater with potential for the influence of surface water shall conduct MPA analysis twice a year in accordance with subparagraphs (a)2. through (a)6. of this rule while the well is in operation. A special condition shall be added to the Drinking Water Permit to meet this requirement.

(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.

DRAFT UPDATES TO MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION

Georgia Minimum Standards for Public Water System

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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)(a);
- 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 ~~dorm~~ 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-nosed 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.