

Surface Water Quality Standards Rule Updates:

Human Health Criteria & Implementation Tools

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Current Rule Activity

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is currently revising the Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington, Chapter 173-201A WAC.

The rule revision is focused on:

1. Establishing new human health criteria.
2. Providing new implementation and compliance tools for dischargers.

What are Human Health Criteria?

Human health criteria (HHC)

- Are numeric limits set for toxic substances to protect people who consume water, fish, and shellfish from Washington's water bodies.
- Address substances such as metals, pesticides, and other organic compounds.

Why is Ecology Adopting HHC?

- Surface water quality standards currently lack human health criteria.
- Ecology defaults federal criteria established in Environmental Protection Agency's 1992 National Toxics Rule.
- Ecology intends to adopt human health criteria appropriately protective Washington's inhabitants.

Modernizing Implementation Tools

- Will allow dischargers to remain in compliance as they effectively work toward improving technology that will meet new permit limits and control sources of pollutants.
- Will directly address legislation passed (RCW 90.48.605) that obligates Ecology to amend water quality standards to allow compliance schedules in excess of ten years under certain circumstances for permitted discharges.

Rule Making Timeline

Rule Initiated

September
2012

**Final Rule Language
Adopted**

target: summer 2014

**Draft Rule
Language
Proposed**

target: early 2014

The Water Quality Policy Forum

- A series of workshops that provide a structured educational focused dialog throughout the rulemaking process.
- Provides an opportunity to engage the public and educate stakeholders on the complex technical and policy issues involved in current rule activities.

Delegates' Table

- A sub-group of the Policy Forum consisting of delegates selected by key stakeholder groups.
- Role: to engage in discussion, bring constituent concerns to the Water Quality Policy Forum, and gain an increased understanding of other stakeholders' views.

Questions?