

Yakima River Metering

Yakima County Superior Court has ordered, consistent with RCW 90.03.360, all water right owners with confirmed water rights in the Yakima River Basin to install an approved metering or measuring device at each confirmed surface water diversion point below 2,000 feet elevation by April 1, 2006. Those with confirmed rights with diversion points above 2,000 feet elevation shall have an approved metering or measuring device installed by April 1, 2007. Those who have rights confirmed in the future will have several months after the order confirming their right to install a metering or measuring device.

Q: Why is measuring water in the Yakima River Basin necessary now?

A: Competition for water peaks during drought years. One way to ensure that water resources are well managed is for all water users to measure the water they divert. This can be accomplished by installing a meter that functions like that used to measure your power use by the power company or by installing other approved measuring devices. Please see WAC 173-090-175. Even small water uses are important. More than one thousand water rights have been confirmed as part of the Yakima River Basin adjudication. Together, these diversions add up to a great deal of water.

Measuring water use will help to ensure water users are within their rights and that efforts to ease drought conditions are adequate to protect senior water rights.

Q: Who needs to install a meter or measuring device?

A: The Yakima County Superior Court order requires surface water users with confirmed water rights to meter and measure their water use if they do not already do so.

The large water diversions of one cubic foot per second (cfs) or greater are required to report their diversions to Ecology. Smaller diversions must measure and retain the data in accordance with state rules, and make it available to Ecology upon request.

Note: In 1994, the court ordered Yakima, Tieton, and Naches River main stem water users who divert one cfs or more to install and maintain measuring devices, to report their use to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and to notify the USBR in advance of any adjustments to their diversion rates. Those requirements remain in place and are not changed by this order.

This new order now requires all other surface water diversions to be measured.

Q: What about people whose water rights have not yet been confirmed, will they be reporting their water use?

A: Water rights are still being adjudicated in five sub-basins. Under the court order, water users will be required to measure their water use when their water rights are confirmed and conditional final orders are issued in these sub-basins.

Q: How will the metering information be used to manage water resources?

A: The measuring data may be used for a variety of water management and compliance purposes. Water measurements will show how much water people are actually using and whether they are within their water rights. Measurements provide important information needed when people seek to lease, sell or otherwise make changes or transfers to their water rights. Measurements also will help water managers to gage the effectiveness of programs designed to improve stream flows.

Q: What if I already have a meter or measuring device?

A: If you already have a meter or measuring device complete and submit the following form:

- **Water Use Measurement Form No. 1 - Open Channel and Pressurized Systems**
- <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/ecy070170.html> (this form is used to report information about the system and is to be used for both open channel and pressurized systems)

Q: How do I record and report my water use?

A: Once you have submitted Measurement Form 1 (see previous question), use the appropriate form below to submit water use data:

- **Pressurized Flow & Open Channel Flow Water Use Data Collection**
- <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/ecy070171.html>

For additional information, please see the link for the Yakima River Basin Metering and Reporting Web site at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>.

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