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| Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025 |
| Fact sheet for Victorian water agencies |
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# Overview

The Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025 (the 2025 Regulations) will come into operation on 6 July 2025.

The 2025 Regulations retain and build on the core requirements in the Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2015 (the 2015 Regulations) to ensure water agencies continue to apply a structured and systematic approach to risk management, supported by a clear set of drinking water quality standards.

New requirements for risk management plans (RMPs) and drinking water quality standards better align obligations under the Act and the Regulations with best practice outlined in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). This alignment promotes a consistent, sector-wide approach to managing risks and supplying safe drinking water. The 2025 Regulations have also been modernised with amendments that clarify requirements and update terminology.

To download the current version of the 2025 Regulations, visit [Victorian Legislation](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>.

# What’s new in the 2025 Regulations?

The structure and content of the 2025 Regulations is broadly consistent with the 2015 Regulations. Targeted changes have been introduced to strengthen alignment between the 2025 Regulations and the ADWG, and respond to issues raised by stakeholders during consultation on the 2015 Regulations. Updates included in the 2025 Regulations include new substantive requirements as well as administrative updates. A summary of these changes is provided below, with further detail in the [Appendix](#_Appendix_1).

Note that this document outlines changes being made in the 2025 Regulations, being the differences between the 2015 Regulations and the 2025 Regulations. Changes made to the 2025 Regulations since an exposure draft and Regulatory Impact Statement were published in April 2025 are identified in the Statement of Reasons published on [Engage Victoria](https://engage.vic.gov.au/review-of-the-safe-drinking-water-regulations) <https://engage.vic.gov.au/review-of-the-safe-drinking-water-regulations>.

To allow time for water agencies and the Health Regulator to prepare to implement the new requirements several amendments will have a delayed commencement. Preparation for implementation will include development of technical and operational guidance, informed by any necessary further consultation. See the [Appendix](#_Appendix_1) for the commencement dates of the relevant provisions.

## Objectives

The primary objective of the 2025 Regulations retains the previous matters: to provide further for the supply of safe drinking water by setting RMP requirements, specifying the documents to be made available for a RMP audit and specifying the issues that are to be addressed in water agency annual reports. The objectives now include a reference to prescribing drinking water quality standards, which reflect the expansion of the drinking water quality standards in the 2025 Regulations and their fundamental role in regulating the supply of safe drinking water.

**Definitions**

For many of the reforms detailed in this fact sheet, small enabling changes to definitions in the 2025 Regulations have been made. These changes are referenced under the topic headlines below and/or outlined in the [Appendix](#_Appendix).

## Risk Management Plan requirements

The 2025 Regulations largely retain the previous RMP requirements, with amendments made to requirements relevant to critical control points (CCPs) and health-based targets (HBTs) to achieve closer alignment with the best practice risk management approach recommended in the ADWG. There are also several new RMP requirements in 2025 Regulations that are outlined in more detail below.

* The existing RMP requirements have been retained to facilitate continued application of core risk management practices, other than for CCPs (see below). The requirements relevant to quantifying microbial hazards will remain in place until 5 July 2026, after which new requirements relating to quantifying microbial risk will take effect. These new requirements are detailed further below under HBTs.
* The 2025 Regulations list additional matters that must be documented, or referred to, in water agency RMPs. The following new RMP requirements, which apply to all water agencies, will come into effect on 6 October 2025. This allows time for agencies to implement the changes and for guidance materials to be finalised. These new RMP requirements include detailing:
  + The water agency’s policy for managing drinking water quality
  + The process for inspecting and maintaining water storage, treatment and distribution assets to ensure the management of water quality risks
  + The process for assessing emerging or potential water quality risks
  + An improvement plan that specifies how the water agency proposes to improve its management of the quality of the water supplied
  + The processes for the short-term and long-term review of data to monitor water quality risks for water.
* The requirement to document CCPs has been amended to apply to any CCPs identified across the entire system of supply, rather than being limited to only treatment processes as required under the 2015 Regulations. This includes documenting how CCPs are identified and recorded. The definitions of CCP and critical limit have been amended in the 2025 Regulations to facilitate this change. Note, while these amendments expand the documentation requirement to cover CCPs across the system of supply, they do not lower the high threshold that defines what constitutes a CCP.
* The requirement to document specified risks to be addressed has been updated to include risks to the taste, odour or clarity of water, which support risk assessments relevant to the new aesthetic drinking water quality standards. This new requirement will come into effect on 6 January 2027 to align with the new aesthetic standards taking effect.
* The term ‘hazard’ has been replaced with ‘water quality risk’ in a number of RMP requirements in the 2025 Regulations. Water quality risk is now defined with reference to the hazards identified in specifying risks for the purposes of section 9(2) of the Act.

### Health-based targets

* From 6 July 2026, new RMP requirements related to quantifying microbial hazards take effect to better align with the microbial HBT framework in the ADWG. These requirements include:
  + Obligations relevant to water agencies that manage a source of untreated water that is to be treated and supplied as drinking water, including:
    - A process for determining a source water category in line with the ADWG
    - Procedures for reviewing and revising the source water category.
  + Obligations relevant to water agencies that apply a drinking water treatment process to untreated water, including:
    - Assessing the treatment required, based on the source water category, to meet the microbial health outcome target
    - Designing and monitoring treatment processes to ensure the water meets the relevant treatment targets
    - Verifying the effectiveness in meeting the treatment targets and health-outcome target
    - Implementing improvements if the water does not meet these targets.
* To support the new microbial HBT RMP requirements, a reporting obligation applies to water agencies that treat untreated water. From 6 July 2026, if a water agency becomes aware that a drinking water treatment process has produced – or will produce – a reportable LRV shortfall (i.e. a log reduction value at least one below a relevant treatment target for the source water category), the agency must notify the Secretary in writing within 10 days of becoming aware of the shortfall.

## Water sampling areas, sampling programs, sampling frequency and analysis

### Water sampling areas

The 2025 Regulations include changes to the terminology and process relevant to water sampling areas (previously sampling localities in the 2015 Regulations).

* Water suppliers must specify water sampling areas for the purposes of their RMPs. Any area that was specified to be a water sampling locality under the 2015 Regulations is taken to be a water sampling area under the 2025 Regulations. The process for determining these areas is broadly consistent with the 2015 Regulations, and the 2025 Regulations provide more flexibility in how boundaries may be defined, by allowing water suppliers to determine the boundaries without the process - in the 2015 Regulations - of submitting proposals to the Secretary for consideration and publication in the Government Gazette.
* The 2025 Regulations require that a water supplier must give written notice to the Secretary within 10 days of specifying a new water sampling area or varying an existing one. The RMP must also be updated to reflect the new or varied area.
* The 2025 Regulations include a new power for the Secretary to direct a water supplier to vary the boundaries of a sampling area or specify a new one. This oversight provision replaces the previous role the Secretary had in approving and Gazetting water sampling localities in the 2015 Regulations. This power may be exercised if the Secretary believes that:
  + The current sampling area is not, or will not be, representative of the drinking water being supplied; or
  + Drinking water is being supplied to an area not currently specified as a water sampling area.

### Sampling programs

Sampling program requirements have undergone some changes for clarity and to reduce unnecessary prescription:

* The 2025 Regulations prescribe sampling characteristics and frequency for water suppliers for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), total trihalomethanes (TTHMs), pH and turbidity (these were located in the drinking water standards in the 2015 Regulations). The frequency for *E. coli*, TTHMs, and turbidity are the same as under the 2015 Regulations.
* Water suppliers are no longer required to ensure that routine samples are not taken from the same location within a water sampling area on consecutive occasions (noting sampling must remain representative).
* Requirements relating to water sampling programs are now set out in distinct regulations, with separate obligations for water suppliers and water storage managers to improve legal clarity.

### Sampling frequency and analysis

The requirements relevant to sample frequency have not changed. However, the Secretary has greater scope in the 2025 Regulations to determine sampling frequencies for any characteristic.

The definition of ‘accredited testing organisation’ has been updated in the 2025 Regulations to align with the NATA accreditation framework, which recognises organisations (not just laboratories) accredited for specific testing activities. This clarifies that field testing can be conducted, provided it is undertaken by an organisation accredited by NATA for the relevant field-based testing methods.

## Drinking water quality standards

### Health based standards

The health-based drinking water quality standards now incorporate all ADWG listed characteristics with a health-based guideline value. This formalises the existing approach used by water agencies to determine risks to human health from drinking water contamination under regulation 12(b) of the 2015 Regulations.

The ‘false positive’ exception for *E. coli* has been removed, so that any *E. coli* detections now constitute a breach of the standard.

### Aesthetic standards

* The 2025 Regulations contain aesthetic-based drinking water standards for all characteristics of drinking water with an aesthetic guideline value that is listed in Table 10.6 of the ADWG, other than chlorine.
* The aesthetic-based standards are that the annualised average of results for each water sampling area must comply with the relevant aesthetic guideline value listed in the 2025 Regulations.
* The aesthetic-based standards (other than the existing standard for turbidity) will commence on 6 January 2027. This transition period allows water agencies time to make necessary updates to systems to comply with reporting requirements, undertake any required community consultation relating to the aesthetic quality of drinking water, and plan for upgrades required to improve drinking water quality. The existing turbidity standard will continue to apply from the date of commencement of the 2025 Regulations.

## Reporting results of sample analysis

* Water agencies that supply drinking water to the public will be required to submit quarterly summary reports to the Secretary on any exceedances of aesthetic-based guideline values. This reporting requirement will commence on 6 January 2027, to align with the introduction of aesthetic standards.
* The existing notification and reporting requirements under sections 18 and 22 of the Act remain unchanged following the commencement of the 2025 Regulations. However, the supporting reporting requirements under regulation 20 (formerly regulation 15) have been amended to include a requirement to detail actions taken or proposed to be taken in response to standards not being met or other reportable risks to human health or aesthetic quality.
* Water suppliers are now required to report sample results that could lead to widespread public complaints. This requirement compliments section 22 of the Act by providing an evidence base to support related reports under that section.

## Audits

There is no change to the specified documents of a RMP audit, or to the requirements relevant to the approval of RMP auditors.

The audit certificate has been updated to include an additional field for the date the audit was completed for clarity. The Department will issue guidance to assist both water agencies and auditors in understanding the new RMP obligations to support compliance and clarity for auditing.

## Infringement Offences

* The 2025 Regulations prescribe infringement offences and penalties for existing and some new offences in the Regulations. This allows authorised officers to issue fines if those offences are committed.
* The Health Regulator will publish information about the operational approach to infringement notices, before any infringement notices are issued.

# Achieving compliance with the 2025 Regulations

## What water agencies should do

* Continue to comply with all elements of the 2025 Regulations that have been remade in the same form.
* Comply with the new sampling area requirements, including notifying the Secretary of new or varied sampling areas after the 2025 Regulations commence. Note, water suppliers must retain details of all sampling localities established under previous Regulations, as these will be deemed sampling areas under the 2025 Regulations. No further action is required for these existing areas unless changes are made after commencement of the 2025 Regulations.
* Water suppliers should ensure their sampling programs comply with prescribed sampling requirements for pH (noting that the prescribed requirements for *E. coli*, TTHMs, and turbidity remain unchanged).
* Water suppliers should continue to comply with the drinking water quality standards and notify the Secretary if their agency becomes aware that the drinking water does not comply, or is not likely to comply, with any relevant water quality standard. For health-based drinking water quality standards, the commencement of these new obligations should not involve new processes as these obligations reflect existing practices. Note that all *E. coli* detections will now be subject to the notification requirements of section 18 and the supporting reporting requirements under regulation 20.
* Comply with new reporting requirements relevant to sample analysis results, including the new requirement for water suppliers to detail actions taken, or proposed to be taken, in response to standards not being met, and reporting requirements relevant to widespread public complaints.
* For CCPs, update RMPs to reflect new requirements. The ADWG provides a good resource for assessing CCPs across the system of supply (also note content below on what the Health Regulator will do regarding CCPs).
* For new RMP requirements that take effect on 6 October 2025, commence preparations to update RMPs in line with these requirements, noting the Health Regulator will publish guidance to support compliance with these new requirements.
* Commence preparation or continue to update RMPs to align with new RMP requirements relating to microbial HBTs, which take effect on 6 July 2026.
* For new aesthetic-based drinking water quality standards, water agencies should begin preparing for the commencement of these obligations on 6 January 2027. This may involve discussing water quality issues with impacted communities, updating their RMPs for risks relevant to aesthetics or updating systems for recording and reporting test results. In the meantime, existing actions to manage aesthetic characteristics of drinking water, in line with the requirements outlined in the 2015 Regulations, should be maintained.

## What the Health Regulator will do

* Continue to provide support to water agencies to comply with new and existing regulatory requirements through our dedicated compliance officers.
* Issue operational and technical guidance to aid water agencies and auditors in understanding the changes from the 2015 Regulations to the new Regulations, and to assist with compliance. The Health Regulator will arrange working groups with industry experts over the coming months to ensure that technical guidance is fit for purpose, such as in implementing changes to the microbial HBT obligations and the associated reporting.
* The Department acknowledges that the new requirement relating to CCPs takes effect from 6 July 2025. It is recognised that this may not allow sufficient time for some agencies to document CCPs across the system of supply and describe how they are identified and recorded. The Health Regulator will work collaboratively with stakeholders to support a reasonable implementation period, ensuring agencies have adequate time and resources to comply.
* Work with water suppliers that are interested in using NATA-accredited field testing in accordance with characteristics specified in their water sampling programs.
* Ensure that a reasonable approach to compliance with sampling frequency requirements is applied in situations where occupational health and safety concerns arise. Ongoing effective communication between water suppliers and the Health Regulator regarding missed samples should continue to guide this approach.
* Develop and publish guidance on the use of infringement powers before any infringement notices are issued.

# Appendix

Table 1: Summary of changes from the 2015 Regulations

| Former reg no. New reg no. | Amendment | Rationale | Date commencing |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | **Objectives**  Added ‘prescribing drinking water quality standards’. | This reflects the expansion of prescribed drinking water quality standards in the 2025 Regulations for both health-based and aesthetic-based characteristics of drinking water. | 6 July 2025 |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended ‘accredited laboratory’ to ‘accredited testing organisation’. | This change clarifies that testing potable water should be undertaken with NATA accreditation, but not necessarily within a laboratory. This change is intended to facilitate ‘field testing’ for appropriate characteristics. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Added ‘Australian Drinking Water Guidelines’, as in force from time to time. | This definition supports the alignment of health-based drinking water quality standards and microbial HBT requirements with the ADWG, including any future updates to the guidelines over the life of the 2025 Regulations as they relate to these provisions. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended ‘critical control point’ and ‘critical limit’. | These definitions were updated for legal clarity and to support the amended CCP requirement that applies across the system of supply. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended the definition of ‘drinking water treatment process’. | This change was made to support legal clarity and to modernise the 2025 Regulations. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Deleted reference to ‘geographic coordinate’. | This level of detail was no longer required in specifying sampling areas. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Added ‘microbial health outcome target’. | Defines the target that water agencies should achieve to minimise the risk of illness in the community from pathogens due to insufficiently treated drinking water. This target aligns with the current version of the ADWG. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended ‘proposed water sampling locality’ to ‘new water sampling area’. | Reflects changes made to regulations relevant to water sampling areas. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Added ‘reportable log reduction shortfall’. | This defines the reporting threshold for when there is a significant log reduction value shortfall in achieving a relevant treatment target for protozoa, bacteria or viruses. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Deleted ‘relevant sampling frequency’. | This reflects changes to the structure of the 2025 Regulations whereby prescribed minimum testing frequencies for standards are no longer listed in a schedule. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended ‘sample analysis parameter’ definition to ‘sample characteristic’. | This change was made to support legal clarity and to align with the ADWG. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Deleted ‘sample standard’. | This is a mechanical change to reflect the expansion of drinking water quality standards and their interaction with the reporting requirements in regulation 20. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Added ‘source water category’. | This new term defines source water category in applying the microbial HBT framework with reference to Table 5.4 in the ADWG. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Added ‘treatment target’. | This new term defines treatment target in applying the microbial HBT framework with reference to Table 5.5 in the ADWG. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Deleted ‘water sampling locality’ and ‘water sampling point’. | The water sampling locality was no longer required with the introduction of water sampling areas.  The removal of water sampling point reduces prescription in Secretary’s determinations to vary the frequency under regulation 18, supporting risk-based decision-making by the water supplier, while ensuring that samples collected are representative of the drinking water supplied. | n/a |
| 5 | **Definitions**  Amended the definition of ‘water sampling program’. | Changes to reflect the distinct regulations relating to water sampling programs for water storage managers and water suppliers. | n/a |
| 6-7  11-12 | **Water sampling area & variation of water sampling area**  Sampling localities have been renamed ‘sampling areas’. Water suppliers are no longer required to submit proposals for sampling areas to the Secretary for gazettal. Instead, suppliers must specify water sampling areas in their RMPs – by reference to source water, treatment process and distribution system – and notify the Secretary of any changes to water sampling areas within 10 days.  The Secretary may direct a water supplier to make changes if a sampling area is not representative or if drinking water is being supplied outside a defined sampling area.  Water sampling localities gazetted under the 2015 Regulations are taken to be sampling areas under the 2025 Regulations. | Removing the requirement for sampling areas to be gazetted reduces the cost and administrative burden associated with the gazettal process and provides suppliers with a more efficient means to adjust water sampling areas. The changes to notify the Secretary of new sampling areas or changes to existing areas provides regulatory oversight.  The power for the Secretary to direct a supplier to change or create a sampling area provides a mechanism for regulatory intervention to ensure sampling areas are representative of the drinking water supplied. | 6 July 2025 |
| 8 6(1)(a) 6(1)(l) 6(1)(o) 6(1)(p) 6(1)(q) | **Risk management plan**  Added new RMP content requirements, including:   1. the water agency's policy for managing drinking water quality 2. the process for inspecting and maintaining water storage, treatment and distribution assets 3. the process for assessing emerging or potential water quality risks 4. an improvement plan to improve the management of the quality of water 5. the processes for the short-term and long-term review of data to monitor water quality risks. | These changes aim to further align RMP requirements with best-practice risk management approaches outlined in the ADWG. They are intended to support sector-wide improvements by promoting more consistent operational practices in meeting minimum risk management requirements. The changes are also expected to streamline and strengthen regulatory oversight by facilitating more targeted auditing, clearer compliance reporting, and greater visibility for the Health Regulator of potential public health risks and non-compliance with RMP requirements. | 6 October 2025 |
| 8(1)(i)  6(1)(n) | **Risk management plan**  The requirement for CCPs has been amended so that it applies to the entire system of supply. | This change is intended to ensure that CCPs, where they are appropriate and required, are documented across the supply system and not limited just in relation to treatment. | 6 July 2025 |
| 8(2)  6(2) | **Risk management plan**  Retained the requirement in the 2015 Regulations to detail the methodology that is used to quantify microbial hazards. | This requirement is consistent with implementing a microbial HBT framework and will ensure ongoing obligations relevant to this framework remain in place until the new microbial HBT requirements take effect (see r 6(3) and 6(4)). | 6 July 2025 until 5 July 2026 |
| 8 6(3)  6(4) | **Risk management plan**  New requirements to align water agency RMPs to the ADWG microbial HBT framework, including requirements that are specific to water agencies that manage a source of untreated water that is to be treated and supplied as drinking water (r 6(3)) and water agencies that apply a drinking water treatment process to untreated water (r 6(4)). | This change requires water agencies to align their framework for managing the microbial safety of drinking water supplies with a contemporary framework that adopts the best Australian evidence. Accountability for applying this framework (e.g., agencies managing the source water must characterise the risks) has been designed in a manner that is more consistent with the Act. | 6 July 2026 |
| 8(3)  6(5)(d) | **Risk management plan**  Added a requirement for water agencies to document the risk to the taste, odour or clarity of water that arises from specified characteristics. | This inclusion strengthens the alignment between water agency activities to address risk and risks associated with the aesthetic qualities of drinking water. The commencement date coincides with the introduction of the aesthetic standards, providing water suppliers time to review and update their risk assessments to ensure consistency with the standards, where relevant. | 6 January 2027 |
| 8  6(6) | **Risk management plan**  Definition of water quality risk in regulation 6 is defined by reference to the hazards identified in regulation 6(5). | This change specifies what hazards must be considered when addressing water quality risks. As a result, references to hazard were removed from several RMP requirements, while ‘risk’ was retained. | 6 July 2025 |
| 8(1)(d)  14 | **Development of water sampling program – water supplier**  Separate obligation under a distinct regulation has been introduced for water suppliers to develop a water sampling program.  This program now requires prescribed sampling characteristics and frequencies for *E. coli*, TTHMs, pH and turbidity.  The program must include all elements previously required under the 2015 Regulations, except the requirement that samples not be taken from the same location on consecutive occasions, which has been removed. | Separate regulations for water storage managers and water suppliers have been introduced to improve legal clarity.  Including prescribed sampling characteristics and frequencies under this regulation also improves legal clarity and aligns better with operational practice.  The removal of the requirement for water suppliers to avoid sampling from the same location on consecutive occasions eliminates unnecessary prescription. However, the core requirement remains: sampling programs must ensure that the drinking water sampled is representative of the drinking water supplied. | 6 July 2025 |
| 8(1)(d)  15 | **Development of water sampling program – water storage manager**  Separate obligation under a distinct regulation has been introduced for water storage managers to each develop a water sampling program. | Separate regulations for water storage managers and water suppliers have been introduced to improve legal clarity. Water storage managers should have existing water sampling programs in place to manage risks in line with RMP obligations set out in the Act. |  |
| 12  16 | **Drinking water quality standards - health**  Amended drinking water quality standards to add ADWG health-based guideline values (excluding chlorine) as standards.  Removed the false positive exception for *E. coli* detections. | Linking health-based standards to the relevant health-guideline values in the ADWG provides clear measures of compliance relevant to the safety of drinking water supplies. It also allows for the establishment of drinking water quality standards that reflect the latest scientific understanding of risks to public health in an Australian context, as updated from time to time in the ADWG.  The previous ‘false positive’ exception for *E. coli* has been removed because it was not effectively driving the intended operational improvements in reducing occurrences of false positives. Water suppliers may still justify instances where a detection of *E. coli* was not representative of the drinking water supplied within their annual reports. | 6 July 2025 |
| 12  16 | **Drinking water quality standards - aesthetics**  Amended drinking water quality standards to include annualised averages of all ADWG aesthetic-based characteristics (except chlorine) with guideline values in the ADWG as drinking water standards. | Including annualised averages of aesthetic guideline values in the 2025 Regulations is intended to promote greater agency focus on maintaining the aesthetic quality of drinking water over time, and enables improved regulatory oversight of the aesthetic performance of drinking water supplies.  Fixing aesthetic standards to aesthetic guideline values in the ADWG as they currently stand will enable any proposed changes to aesthetic standards to be subject to cost-benefit analysis.  The delayed commencement will allow all water agencies time to prepare for compliance with the new standards. The aesthetic standards will commence six months after the microbial HBT requirements, enabling agencies to prioritise necessary improvements to drinking water safety. | 6 January 2027 |
| 13  17 18 | **Frequency of collecting drinking water samples**  Minor wording updates have been made to reflect the distinct regulations governing sampling programs and the separate requirements for sampling frequency based on a determination by the Secretary under regulation 18.  A distinct regulation has been established to enable the Secretary to determine sampling frequencies for any characteristic, along with minor updates to wording for clarity. | The changes relating to regulation 17 have been introduced to support legal clarity and to modernise the 2025 Regulations.  Changes relating to regulation 18 provide the Secretary with broader and more flexible powers to determine sampling frequencies for any sample characteristic – not just those listed in Schedule 2, as was the case under the 2015 Regulations. This enables a more adaptive and responsive approach to addressing monitoring needs that are relevant to Victorian communities. | 6 July 2025 |
| 14  19 | **Analysis of drinking water samples**  The term ‘accredited laboratory’ has been replaced with ‘accredited testing organisation’. | This change aligns analysis requirements more closely with the NATA accreditation framework, which accredits organisations based on their demonstrated competencies in testing, rather than limiting accreditation strictly to laboratories. This change is designed to facilitate field testing where appropriate by water agencies. | 6 July 2025 |
| 15  20 | **Requirement to give analysis results to Secretary**  New requirement to provide a quarterly summary of reports of exceedances of aesthetic-based guideline values in the 2025 Regulations. | The reporting on prescribed aesthetic values provides the Health Regulator with regulatory intelligence at a greater frequency (quarterly) than would be permitted by reporting against aesthetic standards (as the standards are a rolling annual average). To maintain consistency in regulatory expectations, the commencement of the quarterly reporting requirement has been delayed to align with the commencement of the new aesthetic standards. | 6 January 2027 |
| 15  20 | **Requirement to give analysis results to Secretary**  New requirement for water suppliers to detail actions taken or proposed to be taken in response to standards not being met or other reportable risks to human health or aesthetic quality resulting in widespread public complaint. | The additional requirement to report on steps that the supplier has taken or will take in their written summary report is intended to improve the Health Regulator’s visibility of poor-quality water and corrective actions taken by the supplier. | 6 July 2025 |
| 15  20 | **Requirement to give analysis results to Secretary**  New requirement to report analysis results if those results could lead to widespread public complaint. | This requirement is complementary to section 22 of the Act and ensures that analysis results associated with widespread public complaint are reported to the Secretary. | 6 July 2025 |
| 16  21 | **Additional details to be included in a water supplier's annual report**  New requirements to include details of any new water sampling areas or variations of these areas. | Annual report disclosure requirements maintain public transparency about sampling areas that was previously provided through the gazettal process. | 6 July 2025 |
| NEW  23 Schedule 3 | **Infringement offences and infringement penalties**  New regulation and schedule to prescribe offences for the purposes of section 47A of the Act, being offences for which an infringement notice (fine) can be issued. | Infringement notices can allow a targeted, timely and proportionate response to non-compliance. This change creates a new mechanism for enforcing the existing penalties, through a fine rather than court proceedings. The infringement penalty is a fraction of the full penalty that can be awarded in court proceedings. | 6 July 2025 |
| Schedule 1 | **Risk management plan audit**  **Certificate**  Added field for recording the date of audit completion. | This was updated for legal clarity to ensure that the certificate provides clear evidence to enable an assessment of compliance with section 12(3) of the Act. | n/a |
| Schedule 2 | **Schedule 2—Aesthetic quality standards—other chemical or physical characteristics**  Schedule 2 has been updated to reflect relevant aesthetic characteristics and associated guideline values as in Table 10.6 of the ADWG at the time the 2025 Regulations were made. | Aligning aesthetic standards with the current aesthetic guideline values in the ADWG ensures that any future changes to these standards can be subject to cost–benefit analysis. This means that updates to ADWG aesthetic-based guideline values will not automatically be reflected in the aesthetic drinking water quality standards. | n/a |

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