

Drinking Water Program Fact Sheet: Creating a Water System Operations Manual

What is a water system operations manual?

A water system operations manual is a comprehensive “how-to” guidance document that pertains to all physical aspects of a water system’s daily operation and maintenance. Specifically, it includes operation and maintenance activities performed at the system’s

- source and intake facilities,
- water treatment facilities,
- reservoir(s), and
- distribution system.

Additionally, if a system has a certified operator in direct responsible charge (DRC), and employs, contracts, or utilizes other operators in addition to the DRC, then the system must establish a written protocol for each of these other operators that:

- describes the operational decisions the operator(s) are allowed to make,
- details the condition under which the operator(s) must consult with the DRC, and when and how contact is made,
- takes into account the certification level of the operator(s), their knowledge, skills and abilities, and the range of expected operating conditions of the water system, and
- is signed and dated by the DRC and the other operator(s).

Once the manual is complete, water system staff shall be instructed and trained in the use of the manual.

Why is the manual necessary?

The creation and implementation of the manual provides a detailed resource that can be used in the event that the system suddenly loses its DRC and has to employ or contract new operators that are unfamiliar with the system. Additionally, it serves as a good training tool for new employees.

Where can I find the rules regarding the manual’s content?

Rules regarding the manual can be found in OAR 333-061-0064 (2). Additional requirements in regard to operator actions can be found in OAR 333-061-0225 (5).

Who should I contact if I need help in creating the manual?

Additional information regarding manual content and development can be obtained by calling your local county health department, or by calling the Oregon Drinking Water Program at (971) 673-0408. On-line information can be found on the Drinking Water Program Web site at <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Documents/opcert/BasicsForSmallPWS.pdf> (see Section 3.2).