

water *information*

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The Bureau of Meteorology An outline of the Water Regulations 2008



Australian Government

Bureau of Meteorology

An outline of the Water Regulations 2008

The following material is intended as a general introduction to the Water Regulations 2008 under the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007*, that pertain to the giving of water information to the Bureau of Meteorology, and should be read in conjunction with the Act and the Regulations.

This guide to the Regulations does not cover all aspects of the Regulations and persons named in the Regulations are encouraged to visit the Bureau of Meteorology's website at www.bom.gov.au/water to find out more information about the Bureau's new role and the new Regulations. To assist understanding, we have in this outline often used simpler language than is used in the Regulations and have not included all details.

To fully understand their requirements under the Regulations, persons need to read the Regulations available from <http://www.frli.gov.au>



Outline of Presentation

- Bureau's expanded role and responsibilities
- Benefits
- Water Act 2007 (Part 7) – some key features
- Water Regulations 2008
 - Persons
 - Water information
 - Timeframes
 - Form and matter
- Exceptions
- More information



Bureau's additional functions

The Bureau has additional functions under *Water for Our Future* and the *Water Act 2007*

- Issuing national water information standards
- Collecting and publishing water information
- Conducting regular national water resources assessments
- Providing regular water availability forecasts
- Publishing annual National Water Accounts
- Giving advice on matters relating to water information
- Enhancing understanding of Australia's water resources
- Any other matters, relating to water information, specified in the Regulations under the Water Act



Benefits

The Bureau is developing a national water resources information system that will:

- Provide online free public access to up-to-date comprehensive water information
- Enhance the quality and utility of this information with a range of toolboxes to analyse and report water information
- Deliver a range of water information products, including
 - Regular national water resources assessments
 - An annual National Water Account
 - Near real-time water resource reporting
 - Water availability forecasts



Water Act 2007 (Part 7) – some key features

Part 7 of the Water Act is concerned with Water Information

Section 122: Director of Meteorology must annually publish the National Water Account

Section 126: Scope of Regulations to require specified persons or classes of persons to give water information

Section 127: Director of Meteorology may require water information within a specified time, form or manner

Section 130: Director of Meteorology may issue National Water Information Standards



Water Regulations 2008

- The Act authorises the making of Regulations that require specified persons or classes of persons to give water information to the Bureau
- Regulations commenced on 30 June 2008
- The Water Regulations also contain matters other than water information
- The Regulations prescribe:
 - Persons who must give water information
 - Kinds of water information to be given
 - Timeframes for giving information
 - Form and manner of giving water information



Persons: Who must give water information?

- The term '*persons*' is used in the Regulations to refer to individuals as well as trusts, companies, corporations and agencies of State, Territory or Commonwealth Governments that are required to give water information to the Bureau.
- Persons are individually named in the Regulations and are grouped into eight categories; Categories A to H, based on their functions. Some persons are in more than one category as they perform more than one function.
- Categories of persons do not necessarily include all the persons who perform a given function. For example Category D does not include many of the owners or operators of major private storages as the Bureau did not have a comprehensive list of these owners. It is intended to amend the Water Regulations in the future to include a more comprehensive list of major storage owners and operators.



Eight categories of persons

Category A: Lead State/Commonwealth water agencies

Category B: Other State/Commonwealth agencies

Category C: Hydroelectric generators

Category D: Owners or operators of major storages

Category E: Rural water utilities

Category F: Urban water utilities

Category G: CMAs and others with similar functions

Category H: Providers of water information for flood forecasting and warning



Water information: What kinds are there?

- The kinds of water information to be given to the Bureau under the Regulations have been classified into nine categories of water information.
- Each category is further defined into subcategories.
- A tenth category (Category 10) refers to descriptive and reference information about information in categories 1 to 9.



Ten categories of water information

- 1: Surface water resources
- 2: Groundwater resources
- 3: Information on major and minor storages
- 4: Meteorological information
- 5: Water use
- 6: Rights, allocations and trades
- 7: Urban water management
- 8: Water restrictions
- 9: Water quality
- 10: Descriptive/reference (relating to information given in categories 1-9)



Subcategories

- Each category of water information is divided into subcategories, for example:
- Category 2, groundwater resources has sub categories 2a and 2b:
 - Subcategory 2a: groundwater levels
 - Subcategory 2b: groundwater pressures



Timeframes: When must water information be given?

There are three timeframes in the Regulations:

- Interim Period
- Transfer frequency
- Temporal reporting resolution



Interim period

Time period from when the Regulations commence and within which a person must give water information

- Nominally 3, 6, 9 or 12 months, however there are variations due to non-working days and whether information is daily, weekly, monthly or yearly.
- See www.bom.gov.au/water for a detailed report of when you must first give water information



Transfer frequency

- Transfer frequency refers to the frequency with which new water information must be given to the Bureau
- It can be hourly, daily, monthly or yearly
- An example is groundwater level of a bore which is required to be given monthly



Temporal reporting resolution

- Water information is in some cases requested at a particular temporal resolution - such as total weekly volume. In this case only the total weekly volume must be given, irrespective of how many observations were made since information was last given to the Bureau
- The default requirement where a resolution is not specified, is that all new observations that have come into a persons possession since the specified information was last given, must be given



Historical and new/ongoing information

The Bureau requires both historical and new/ongoing water information

- Historical information
 - One-off transfer
 - Given within 14 days of the end of Interim Period
 - Given by CD, DVD, external hard drive etc.
- New/Ongoing information
 - Ongoing transfers
 - Must commence no later than the end of Interim Period
 - Given by File Transfer Protocol (FTP)
 - Transferred at frequencies listed in the Regulations



Form and manner: How is water information given?

Historical Information

- CD, DVD or on an external storage device.
- The Regulations also provide for historical information to be given by File Transfer Protocol (FTP) or via Web Services. However, given the potentially large file sizes, we advise against FTP.
- The Bureau does not currently have the operational capacity to poll Web Services, please alert us if you are considering giving water information via Web Services



Form and manner: How is water information given?

New/Ongoing Information

- Time Series Data and Meta-data should be provided by FTP or via Web Services
- Water Information that is not Time Series Data should be provided by FTP. However, where information is required at discrete and widely spaced time intervals, such as at the end of each financial year it can be given by CD, DVD or on an external storage device.
- Information on Water Restrictions can be given by email



What information do I have to give?

- Each category of persons has specific obligations
- Persons in more than one category must meet the requirements of each of those categories
- All persons (except persons solely in Category H) have to give both historical and new/ongoing water information
- Persons who are solely in Category H, are only required to continue giving the information they currently provide for flood forecasting and warning purposes, they are not required to provide historical information



Categories of information to be given by each category of persons

- ‘Water Regulations online’ provides a searchable interface which generates a report for persons named in the Regulations
- The report lists:
 - Category of persons
 - The type of water information they are required to give
 - The timeframe in which they must give it to the Bureau
- Visit www.bom.gov.au/water to use ‘Water Regulations online’



Exceptions

Persons do not have to give specified information if....

- It is not in their possession, custody or control.
 - In almost all instances (the exceptions are information on flood forecasting, flood warning and on water restrictions) the Bureau will interpret this to mean information in their data management system (not just in a field based data logger)
- They do not have it in an electronic format
 - Paper records are not required to be given



Exceptions *(continued)*

Persons do not have to give specified information if....

- They reasonably believe it is already in the Bureau's possession and they have notified the Bureau in writing of their decision not to provide the information based on that belief
- It is solely part of a short term project (conditions apply)
- It is solely part of contractual agreement with persons not named under the Regulations (conditions apply)



Where to from now?

- Water Regulations commenced on 30 June 2008
- Your organisation should have received a letter around that date telling you what is required
- If you did not receive such a letter, use the 'Water Regulations Online' tool at www.bom.gov.au/water to check whether you are a named person.
- If you are named but did not receive a letter please contact waterinfo@bom.gov.au or Brendan Moran on (02) 6232 3504



Further information

Visit: www.bom.gov.au/water

Email: waterinfo@bom.gov.au

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