

Green Facts

New water conservation requirements for permits to take water

Water conservation is an important part of the Ministry of the Environment's Permit to Take Water (PTTW) program. Under the Water Taking and Transfer Regulation, all permit applicants must document the conservation practices they have undertaken and will be undertaking throughout the life of their permit.

What do I need to know about conservation?

Water conservation is critical to sustaining our water resources and protecting the environment. Water conservation is defined as a reduction in the use, loss or waste of water or an increase in the efficiency of water use.

When applying for a permit, you must document the water conservation measures and practices you have already undertaken and will be undertaking throughout the duration of your permit. In the case of applications for increased water takings, the ministry may ask the applicant to demonstrate whether the need for the increased taking can be reduced or avoided by implementing water conservation under the current permitted volume.

All permit applicants must complete a Water Conservation Schedule (Schedule 1 in the *Guide to Permit to Take Water Application Form*), which includes:

- a checklist of water conservation best management practices that have been implemented and will be implemented;
- a description of water conservation best management practices and how and when they were or will be applied;

- a list of other approvals or certifications the applicant has received for water conservation best management practices and the information used in determining best water management practices (e.g., Environmental Farm Plan, Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses).

The ministry will determine whether to issue a permit and if so, what specific conditions regarding water conservation will be applied to the permit. For example, water efficiency and conservation conditions may include requiring the applicant to develop a schedule of water takings, conditions on the storage of water, conducting a water efficiency audit, and/or certification of conservation/efficiency plans by an association or authority.

For existing permit holders, everyone with a water taking permit is encouraged to adopt water conservation best practices and to make the most efficient use of the water they take.

Why is water conservation so important?

Water conservation makes good business sense. Employing water efficiency Best Management Practices (BMPs) can lower operating costs and enhance the efficiency of your operation:

- Almost all commercial, industrial and agricultural activities and processes that use water also use energy and other raw materials. Reducing water use can in turn reduce energy consumption and raw material use.

- Reducing demand placed on equipment such as water pumps and boiler systems helps them to operate more efficiently and reduces costly wear and tear.
- Water efficiency can help reduce wastewater discharges and associated costs.
- Municipal water conservation measures have proven to be more cost efficient for meeting growing water demand than building or expanding water treatment facilities.

Water conservation benefits everyone. By using water more efficiently we help ensure a sustainable supply of water for now and the future. Reducing water use throughout the year should be the goal of any water efficiency initiative, but this is especially critical during low water periods. No matter where you live in Ontario, we have all experienced hot, dry periods in the summer months or winters with low snowfall. Little or no precipitation results in reduced water flows. Consequently, lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater sources are more vulnerable. By implementing water conservation measures and practices and reducing water use throughout the year, we can all help ensure the long term health and viability of the water supply and watershed ecosystem.

What conservation information do I include with my permit application?

All permit applicants must provide accurate information on which water conservation measures and practices they are currently undertaking and will be undertaking for the extent of their permit, including:

- the goal for reducing use, loss or waste of water or for increasing efficiency of water use, for example litres per day per unit of production or litres per day per capita for the residential sector;
- dates of when the best management practices were implemented or will be implemented;
- specific details of the best management practices applied, including equipment; for

example, pump specification, and processes such as water used for industrial production and/or irrigation; and

- sources of information used, such as information relevant for your sector in water conservation and efficiency management practices and measures.

Providing details on water conservation practices and processes with your application enables the ministry to properly assess the water taking and ensure you can capitalise on water efficiency opportunities.

Applicants who already have implemented water conservation best management practices as part of an Environmental Farm Plan, ISO 14001 environmental management system, municipal Master Plan or other program or method, should record this information on the Water Conservation Schedule and, on request, forward copies of supporting documentation to the ministry. Be sure to consult with a ministry representative prior to submitting your permit application. Refer to the bottom of this fact sheet for other PTTW resources and ministry contact information.

Where can I get more information?

Water takers represent a diverse group of businesses and industries and as such, their water using activities and processes vary. Industrial, commercial and municipal sector associations are aware of the appropriate water conservation best practices for their respective sectors. Permit applicants and permit holders should contact their sector associations for information on water conservation best management practices. For example, the Ontario Water Works Association (www.owwa.ca) and the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association (www.cwwa.ca) can provide municipalities with more information on municipal water efficiency programs.

Agricultural operators should contact their professional association(s) for water conservation information and resources. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), at

www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA also has information on best management practices, including efficient irrigation systems and preparing Environmental Farm Plans.

Water conservation resources and information for both agricultural operations and Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) facilities are available on-line at

www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3785e.pdf.

The following sector-based Guides to Resource Conservation and Cost Savings Opportunities are available at the ministry's Public Information Centre at (1-800/565-4923):

- Meat and Poultry Sector
- Food Services Sector
- Dairy Processing Sector
- Office Buildings
- Soap, Detergents and Related Products Sector
- Plastics Processing Sector
- Automotive Parts Manufacturing Sector

For more Information, please refer to the *Permit to Take Water Manual* and the *Guide to the Permit to Take Water Application*. These and other PTTW publications are available on-line at www.ene.gov.on.ca or at the regional offices listed below.

General information on the PTTW program is also available through the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800/565-4923 or within the Toronto calling area at 416/325-4000.

Ministry of the Environment Regional Offices

Eastern Region (Kingston)
Tel. 613/549-4000 or 1-800/267-0974

Central Region (Toronto)
Tel. 416/326-6700 or 1-800/810-8048

Northern Region (Thunder Bay)
Tel. 807/475-1205 or 1-800/875-7772

West Central Region (Hamilton)
Tel. 905/521-7640 or 1-800/668-4557

Southwest Region (London)
Tel. 519/873-5000 or 1-800/265-7672

The original application, supporting information, and the application fee must be sent to:

The Ministry of the Environment
Attention: Permit to Take Water Director,
Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch
2 St. Clair Avenue West, Floor 12A
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1L5
Tel.: Toronto calling area at 416/314-8001 or toll free at 1-800/461-6290.