

Issued by the Director of Public Health  
under the *Public Health Act 1997*

Effective 4 March 2019

# Laboratory Guidelines for Notifiable Water Contaminants

*This Guideline contains legal requirements for laboratories to notify certain test results for drinking water, recreational water, and regulated systems*

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# PART A Issuing Statement and Version Notes

## Issuing statement

I, Dr Mark Veitch, being and as the Director of Public Health, acting pursuant to section 184 of the *Public Health Act 1997*, hereby:

- (1) issue these Guidelines, being the *Laboratory Guidelines for Notifiable Water Contaminants*; and
- (2) determine that these Guidelines come into effect on and from 4 March 2019.

Dated this 8 February 2019

Dr Mark Veitch

Director of Public Health

## Version notes

4 March 2019 - This version brings together laboratory notification requirements for water contaminants. These were previously contained in separate guidelines.

# PART B Introduction

## Content of guidelines

These Guidelines set out when and how the superintendent of a laboratory must notify the Director of Public Health of notifiable contaminants in water.

## Legal framework

Under section 40 of the *Public Health Act 1997*, the Director of Public Health has issued a public notice declaring certain organisms and substances to be notifiable contaminants.

Section 46 of the Act provides that guidelines issued by the Director under section 184 may require a person notify the Director of certain notifiable contaminants. These guidelines serve that purpose for notifiable contaminants in drinking water, recreational water, and water in regulated systems.

They complement the framework in the Act and other guidelines that require the taking and testing of water samples.

Additional guidelines require laboratories to notify other test results (eg for diseases and food contaminants). All guidelines are available at [www.health.tas.gov.au](http://www.health.tas.gov.au)

Guidelines contain legal requirements. It is an offence under section 184(5) of the *Public Health Act 1997* to not follow them.

## PART C Definitions

A word or phrase appearing in *italics* in these Guidelines has the meaning given to it in the table below. If there is an asterisk (\*) next to the word or phrase, its meaning is taken from the *Public Health Act 1997* at the date of issuing the Guidelines.

If the definition in the Act later changes, that new definition replaces the one below.

Word or phrase	Definition
Australian Drinking Water Guidelines	means the <i>Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> published by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council as in force from time-to-time
Director of Public Health*	means the Director of Public Health appointed under the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i>
drinking water	means water intended for human consumption
guidelines*	means guidelines issued by the <i>Director of Public Health</i> under section 184 of the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i>
laboratory*	means a laboratory whether associated with a hospital or not
measurement uncertainty	means a non-negative parameter characterising the dispersion of quantity values attributed to a measured quantity
notifiable water contaminant	<p>(a) in relation to <i>drinking water</i>, means any microorganism or substance for which a health guideline value is set under the <i>Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> as in force from time-to-time, if that value is exceeded;</p> <p>(b) in relation to <i>recreational water</i>, means any microorganism or substance for which a health guideline value is set under <i>guidelines for recreational water</i> as in force from time-to-time, if that value is exceeded; and</p> <p>(c) in relation to water from a <i>regulated system</i>, means any microorganism or substance for which a health guideline value is set under <i>guidelines for regulated systems</i> as in force from time-to-time, if that value is exceeded</p>

Public Health Officer	<p>means the person or persons holding the following positions within the Department of Health (Tasmania) -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 515689 (State Manager, Environmental Health Services);</li> <li>(b) 501061 (Senior Environmental Health Officer); and</li> <li>(c) for <i>notifiable water contaminants</i> relating to drinking water, 501062 (State Water Officer)</li> </ul>
recreational water	<p>means -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) any coastal or estuarine water, including tidal washed pools and marine baths that interchange with seawater;</li> <li>(b) natural freshwater environs, such as rivers, streams, lakes, weirs and dams; or</li> <li>(c) public pools and public spa pools, including therapeutic pools and floatation tanks</li> </ul>
regulated system*	<p>means -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an air-handling system;</li> <li>(b) a cooling tower;</li> <li>(c) a warm-water system;</li> <li>(d) a humidifying system; or</li> <li>(e) any other system or process that may involve a risk of legionnaires' disease (<i>legionellosis</i>) required to be registered under section 113 of the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i></li> </ul>
superintendent	<p>means the person in charge of a <i>laboratory</i></p>
suspects	<p>includes where a preliminary test result indicates the possible presence of a <i>notifiable water contaminant</i></p>

## PART D Notifying Test Results

### Who must notify

- (1) The *superintendent* of a *laboratory* must notify the *Director of Public Health* of a *notifiable water contaminant* in accordance with the requirements of these Guidelines.

### When to notify

- (2) The *superintendent* must immediately notify the *Director of Public Health* if -
  - (a) by reason of a test carried out in the *laboratory*; or
  - (b) by reason of a test result received by the *laboratory* -the *superintendent* becomes aware or *suspects* that a *notifiable water contaminant* is present, or may be present, in a sample of *drinking water*, *recreational water*, or water from a *regulated system*.

### How to notify

- (3) On being required to notify, the *superintendent* must:
  - (a) telephone the *Director of Public Health* or a *Public Health Officer* (the default Public Health Hotline number is 1800 671 738); or
  - (b) send an email to [waternotification@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:waternotification@health.tas.gov.au).

### What to notify

- (4) The *superintendent* must notify the following information:
  - (a) in relation to the *superintendent*:
    - (i) name;
    - (ii) name of the *laboratory* where employed;
    - (iii) street address;
    - (iv) postal address (if different to above);
    - (v) telephone number(s); and
    - (vi) email address; and
  - (b) in relation to the sample:
    - (i) name and telephone number or email address of the individual submitting the sample to the *laboratory* for testing;
    - (ii) sample number or other identifier allocated by that individual;
    - (iii) sample number or other identifier allocated by the *laboratory*;
    - (iv) water source from which the sample was taken - ie *drinking water*, *recreational water*, or water from a *regulated system*; and
    - (v) date and time of sample collection; and
  - (c) in relation to the test:

- (i) name of the *laboratory* where the test occurred (if different to the *laboratory* in clause (a)); and
  - (ii) test method; and
- (d) in relation to the *notifiable water contaminant*:
- (i) name;
  - (ii) value and/or level; and
  - (iii) *measurement uncertainty* (if known).

**Public and Environmental Health Services**

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