



COMPARISON OF STATE AND FEDERALLY APPROVED WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

Current as of March 7, 2008

IMPORTANT NOTE TO READER: This summary of regulations has been prepared by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and does not constitute an official version of these regulations, nor does it necessarily reflect current law. If any discrepancy is found between this booklet and the Alaska Administrative Code, the Code should be considered the final authority, unless the discrepancy is the result of an error in the Code.

State Water Quality Standards (WQS) must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they can be used in Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) actions such as NPDES wastewater discharge permits, Total Maximum Daily Load allocations, and CWA Section 303(d) impaired waterbody listings.

The following table summarizes the differences between 2006 Alaska WQS (see note 2 below) and WQS effective for Federal purposes. For all other Alaska WQS, use the 2006 Alaska WQS for all purposes. This table was developed on February 11, 2008 by DEC and EPA WQS staff.

WQS	State Approved Criteria	Federally Approved Criteria
Mixing zones (all uses)	2006 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.240	2003 Alaska WQS ¹ , except for 3Q2 flow condition 18 AAC 70.240-270
Natural conditions (all uses)	2006 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.010(d)	2003 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.235(b)
Residues (all uses)	2006 Alaska WQS fresh marine 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)	2003 Alaska WQS fresh marine 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)
Bacteria for use (2)(B)(i) and (2)(B)(ii) (marine water contact recreation and secondary recreation)	2006 Alaska WQS ² 18 AAC 70.020(b) (2)	<i>EPA 1986. Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria</i> Geometric mean of 35 Enterococci per 100 mL, and single-sample maximum based on intensity of use EPA's 2004 Bacteria Rule: 69 FR 67217-67243

WQS	State Approved Criteria	Federally Approved Criteria
Arsenic for uses (1)(A)(i) and (1)(B)(i) (drinking water criteria, primary recreation criteria)	2003 Toxics Manual³ as adopted by reference in 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11) 50µg/L	2003 Toxics Manual³ 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11) 50µg/L approved by EPA for CWA purposes. For SDWA purposes, Class A Public Water Systems required to meet 10 µg/L as of 1/23/06 ⁴ .
Fluoride for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) 2.0 mg/L
Odor for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) 3 threshold odor number
Mercury for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria)	2003 Toxics Manual³ 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) Note 5 ⁵ 2.4 µg/L acute (total recoverable) 0.012 µg/L chronic (total recoverable)
Selenium for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria))	2003 Toxics Manual³ 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) Note 5 ⁶ 20 µg/L acute (total recoverable) 5 µg/L chronic (total recoverable)
Carcinogens for uses (1)(A)(i) and (iii), (1)(B)(i) and (ii), (1)(C), (2)(A)(i), (2)(B)(i) and (ii), and (2)(C) and (D)	40 CFR 131.36	40 CFR 131.36

¹ “2003 AK WQS” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards” as amended through June 26, 2003, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/pdfs/70mas.pdf>

² “2006 AK WQS” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards” as amended through December 28, 2006 and available at http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/18%20AAC_70%20_Amended_December_28_2006.pdf

³ “2003 Manual” refers to the State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “Alaska Water Quality Criteria Manual for Toxic and Other Deleterious Organic and Inorganic Substances” as amended through May 15, 2003, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/70wqsmanual.pdf>

⁴ EPA adopted an Arsenic Rule for the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation Maximum Contaminant Level for Arsenic that will reduce the criteria from 50 µg/L to 10 µg/L. DEC’s standards have not yet been updated.

⁵ Adoption by reference of *Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Mercury – 1984*, EPA 440/5-84-026.

⁶ Adoption by reference of *Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Selenium – 1987*, EPA 440/5-80-070.