

# COMPARISON OF STATE AND FEDERALLY APPROVED WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

## Current as of July 26, 2012

Alaska Water Quality Standards (WQS) must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they can be used for actions regulated under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Discrepancies between state and federally approved standards arise when:

- Alaska adopts a standard and there is a lag time between when it is approved by EPA or
- EPA promulgates criteria for Alaska and there is a lag time between when it is promulgated and when Alaska adopts a corresponding standard.

The following table summarizes the differences between 2012 Alaska WQS<sup>1</sup> and federally approved statewide WQS for CWA purposes such as APDES<sup>2</sup> or NPDES<sup>3</sup> wastewater discharge permits, Total Maximum Daily Load allocations, and CWA Section 303(d) impaired waterbody listings. For actions under state regulation only such as wastewater discharges to groundwater, the 2012 Alaska WQS may be used exclusively.

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 factsheet and the Alaska Administrative Code, the Code should be considered the final authority, unless the discrepancy is the result of a technical error in the Code.

WQS	State Only Approved Criteria	Federally Approved State Criteria
Mixing zones (all uses)	<a href="#">2012 Alaska WQS</a> <sup>1</sup> 18 AAC 70.240	<a href="#">2003 Alaska WQS</a> <sup>4</sup> except for 3Q2 flow condition 18 AAC 70.240-270
Natural conditions (all uses)	<a href="#">2012 Alaska WQS</a> 18 AAC 70.010(d)	<a href="#">2003 Alaska WQS</a> 18 AAC 70.235(b)
Residues (all uses)	2012 Alaska WQS <a href="#">freshwater</a> and <a href="#">marine water</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)	2003 Alaska WQS <a href="#">freshwater</a> and <a href="#">marine water</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)

<sup>1</sup> "2012 Alaska WQS" refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled "18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards" as amended through April 8, 2012 and available at <http://dec.alaska.gov/commish/regulations/pdfs/18%20AAC%2070.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

<sup>3</sup> National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

<sup>4</sup> "2003 Alaska 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/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/70mas.pdf>

## Comparison Of State And Federally Approved Water Quality Standards

July 24, 2012

WQS	State Only Approved Criteria	Federally Approved State Criteria
Bacteria for use (2)(B)(i) and (2)(B)(ii) (marine water contact recreation and secondary recreation)	<a href="#">2012 Alaska WQS</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b) (2)	<a href="#">EPA 1986. Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria</a> Geometric mean of 35 Enterococci per 100 mL, and single-sample maximum based on intensity of use  EPA's 2004 Bacteria Rule: <a href="#">69 FR 67217-67243</a>
Fluoride for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	<a href="#">1999 Alaska WQS</a> <sup>5</sup> 18 AAC 70.020(b) 2.0 mg/L
Odor for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	<a href="#">1999 Alaska WQS</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b) 3 threshold odor number
Mercury for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria)	<a href="#">2008 Toxics Manual</a> <sup>6</sup> 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	EPA's 1995 National Toxics Rule: <a href="#">60 FR 22229-22237</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b) 2.4 µg/L acute (total recoverable) 0.012 µg/L chronic (total)
Selenium for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria)	<a href="#">2008 Toxics Manual</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	<a href="#">1999 Alaska WQS</a> 18 AAC 70.020(b) Note 5 <sup>7</sup> 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)	<a href="#">2008 Toxics Manual</a>	<a href="#">40 CFR 131.36</a>

<sup>5</sup> "1999 Alaska WQS" refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled "18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards" as amended through May 27, 1999, and available at [http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/18\\_AAC\\_70\\_WQS\\_May27,1999.pdf](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/18_AAC_70_WQS_May27,1999.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> "2008 Toxics Manual" refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled "Alaska Water Quality Criteria Manual for Toxic and Other Deleterious Organic and Inorganic Substances" as amended through December 12, 2008, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/Alaska%20Water%20Quality%20Criteria%20Manual%20for%20Toxic%20and%20Other%20Deleterious%20Organic%20and%20Inorganic%20Substances.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Adoption by reference of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Selenium – 1987, EPA 440/5-80-070.