

SAFER Clearinghouse Drought & Conservation Reporting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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I. General

Q1: What kind of reports are required by the 2024 DDW Technical Reporting Order?

A1: The following reports are required by the 2024 DDW Technical Reporting Order (Order No. DDW_HQ_2024_001): Monthly Potential Water Outage Report, Weekly Water Outage Report, Monthly Drought & Conservation Report, Single/Aggregated Urban Drought & Conservation Report, Annual Inventory Report, and the electronic Annual Report. The contents of this report include technical questions which can be accessed here: <https://wbappsrv.waterboards.ca.gov/safer/>. The technical questions relate to, amongst other things, public water systems' sources and supplies, drinking water demand, forecast of water shortages, demand reduction measures, efforts to augment supplies to meet current demand, and more. See below for a list of reports and which systems are required to complete them as found in the Clearinghouse User Guide.

Drought Report Types

Report Type	Report Frequency	Reporting Deadlines	Which water systems?
Annual Inventory Report (AIR)	Annually	March 31 of the following year	All public water systems
Monthly Drought & Conservation Reporting	Monthly	Quarterly (month after quarter end date)	All community water systems and schools that are not conducting Single and Aggregated Urban & Drought Conservation Reporting.
Single and Aggregated Urban Drought & Conservation Reporting	Monthly	End of the following month (e.g., Feb 28)	Urban Retail Water Suppliers
Monthly Potential Water Outage Reporting	Monthly	Monthly (7 days after end of month)	Water systems that the Division of Drinking Water determines are at-risk of experiencing a severe water shortage or water outage, and which are notified by the Division.
Weekly Water Outage Reporting	Weekly	Weekly (7 days after end of week)	Water systems that the Division of Drinking Water determines are experiencing a water outage, and which are notified by the Division.

Q2: What is the SAFER Clearinghouse?

A2: The SAFER Clearinghouse is a web-based reporting tool that allows public water systems to submit required information to the state in a machine-readable format.

Q3: How can I access the SAFER Clearinghouse?

A3: You can access the SAFER Clearinghouse by requesting an account here: <https://wbappsrv.waterboards.ca.gov/safer/>. For guidance on how to create an account, follow the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q4: Who is required to complete required reporting?

A4: All public water systems are required to report to the SAFER Clearinghouse. For a listing of each report type and who is responsible for reporting, please see Section 1.2, Table 1 in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q5: Can I report for more than one system?

A5: Yes, you may request access to submit a report for multiple systems. For guidance on how to create an account that can report for multiple water systems, follow the direction detailed in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

II. Authority

Q1: What authority does the State Water Board have to require reporting?

A1: The California Health and Safety Codes section 116530 authorizes the State Water Board to require a public water system to submit a technical report in a form and format at intervals specified by the State Water Board, which may include without limitation: water quality information, physical descriptions of the existing water system, information related to drinking water accessibility, and information related to technical, managerial, and financial capacity and sustainability.

Q2: Why is the State Water Board requiring reporting?

A2: The California Legislature found and declared in Senate Bill 552, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom on September 23, 2021, that “droughts are predicted to become more frequent, longer, and more severe as climate change progresses, putting drinking water supplies at risk of running dry or becoming contaminated,” that “there are currently varying levels of water contingency planning and coverage across counties for small water suppliers and self-supported communities, leaving hundreds of thousands of people at risk of going without water to meet their basic household and drinking water needs during the next drought,” and that “California can take basic steps to implement more proactive drought planning that would benefit the communities most at risk, and by doing so help prevent catastrophic impacts on drinking water for communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.”

Rather than update the eAR to address these new and other existing requirements

(such as Monthly Drought and Conservation Reporting for urban retail water suppliers), The State Board is moving requirements from these separate databases into the Clearinghouse in an effort to reduce duplicative and redundant reporting.

Q3: Why do we have to report information such as pumping hours, flow rates, reservoir elevations and height of intake not associated with supply and demand?

A3: The data you report will also help satisfy reporting requirements for new and existing regulations regarding water shortages associated with SB 552 and update our inventory for permitting, survey assessment, and needs assessment purposes.

Q4: Where can I find a copy of the technical order?

A4: Information on the drought technical orders can be found here:

<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/ddw-technical-order.pdf>.

Q5: What if I have a source listed/missing that is incorrect?

A5: If you cannot find a source you are trying to report for or if the source contains incorrect information, contact your regulatory agency.

Current Water Board District Office (state regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/ddwem/DDWdistrictofficesmap.pdf

Current Local Primacy Agency (county regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/web_contact_info_district_lpa.pdf

Q6: Who should report on behalf of a water system?

A6: Please discuss reporting responsibilities with the administrative contact or owner of the public water system and determine who is responsible for reporting.

III. Clearinghouse Reporting

Q1: How do I comply with my reporting requirements?

A1: To comply with reporting requirements, water systems must submit their reports at the frequency specified in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide. For a listing of each report type and who is responsible for reporting, please see Section 1.2, Table 1 in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here:

<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q2: My water system is an Urban Retail Water Supplier and is already complying with monthly Urban Conservation reporting. Does this replace the current reporting system?

A2: In July 2023, the Monthly Conservation Reporting portal was shut down. Now, reports must be submitted in the SAFER Clearinghouse for all of 2023.

Q3: How often is reporting required?

A3: Reporting is required at the frequency listed in the table above. If you are unsure of your reporting frequency, it is also displayed when you login to the SAFER Clearinghouse here: <https://wbappsrv.waterboards.ca.gov/safer/>.

To view required reports in the SAFER Clearinghouse, navigate to your system's "About" page by searching for it or selecting it from the "My Systems" page. From your system's "About" page, select the "Required Reporting" tab to view a table of your system's required reports. More detailed directions can be found in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here:

<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q4: Where can I see the data I will be required to submit?

A4: A complete guide of the data collected in the Monthly Drought and Conservation Reports, Monthly Drought Order Reports, and Weekly Drought Order reports can found here <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q5: Does the SAFER Clearinghouse include definitions or guidance on the data requested?

A5: Yes. Click on the question mark icons next to each data field to open a pop-up window with a help tip. If the help tip does not meet your needs, please contact clearinghouse-reporting@waterboards.ca.gov.

Q6: Can multiple water system users enter data into the same report?

A6: Yes. Multiple water system users in the SAFER Clearinghouse, that have permissions for the same water system (PWSID) can enter and save data in the same Report just not in the same tab at the same time. However, only one user will need to review and attest the data is accurate before officially submitting the report to the State.

Q7: Can I submit estimated data in the report?

A7: Yes. Water systems can submit preliminary estimates for some of the data collected in the reports. Water systems will be required to amend their submitted reports to provide final values by the end of the calendar year to comply with annual reporting in the Annual Inventory Report.

Q8: What happens if I don't submit my report by the deadline?

A8: Submission of required reports is mandatory for all public water systems. Failure to meet these requirements may result in enforcement action.

Q9: How do I view previous reports for my water system?

A9: You may view previously submitted, past due, and pending reports for your water system by logging in to the SAFER Clearinghouse (<https://wbappsrv.waterboards.ca.gov/safer/>) and navigating to your system's "About" page by searching for it or selecting it from the "My Systems" page. From your system's "About" page, select the "Required Reporting" tab to view a table of your system's required reports. More detailed directions can be found in the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q10: Will the information I submit as part of my reports be made public?

A10: Yes.

IV. Troubleshooting

Q1: I need help, who should I contact?

A1: For questions regarding your public water system inventory contact your regulating agency.

Current Water Board District Office (state regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/ddwem/DDWdistrictofficesmap.pdf.

Current Local Primacy Agency (county regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/web_contact_info_district_lpa.pdf

For questions or technical support with accessing or using the SAFER Clearinghouse or the technical reporting order, contact clearinghouse-reporting@waterboards.ca.gov.

Q2: What do I do if incorrect data was submitted or if I need to revise a submission?

A2: If revisions are needed, you may reopen an already submitted report in the SAFER Clearinghouse to revise and re-submit. Your username and the date of revision will be captured and stored separately from that of the original submitter and original submission date. For more instructions on how to revise a report, consult the Clearinghouse Reporting User Guide found here:

<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/resources-for-drinking-water-systems/docs/clearinghouse-reporting-user-guide.pdf>

Q3: I cannot find my water system, what should I do?

A3: Please navigate to the Search tab to locate your water system, then click on required reporting. If this is not visible, then you may need to request access to the water system by editing your Account. If you cannot find your water system when creating an account, contact clearinghouse-reporting@waterboards.ca.gov.

Q4: I cannot find the source I am trying to report for, what should I do?

A4: If you cannot find a source you are trying to report for, contact your regulatory agency.

Current Water Board District Office (state regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/ddwem/DDWdistrictofficesmap.pdf.

Current Local Primacy Agency (county regulators) contact information can be found here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/web_contact_info_district_lpa.pdf

V. Duplicate Reporting

Q1: Does the Clearinghouse reporting mean we do not need to submit an eAR report?

A1: The eAR will remain a required report. However, it will be modified so users will not have to report the same information in the eAR and in the Clearinghouse. For more information or questions related to the eAR please contact

DDW-EAR@waterboards.ca.gov.

Q3: Do the Clearinghouse reports fulfill the Monthly Conservation Reporting (DRINC) requirements?

A3: Yes they do. If you submit a Clearinghouse report that will also satisfy the DRINC requirements for urban retail water supplier Monthly Conservation Reporting for the same month.

VI. Reporting Data

Q1: How can I calculate Maximum Day Demand?

A1: If you do not have a daily reading for demand, Maximum Day Demand can be estimated by taking your total demand for the month, dividing by the number of days in the month, and multiplying that estimate by 1.5. For the date, you can enter the end of the month.

Q2: How can I complete the required reporting if I do not meter my system?

A2: Please mark No to the question, "Do you meter the volume of potable water delivered to your individual customers?"

VII. Data Uses

Q1: How will this data be used?

A1: This portal is intended to streamline data reporting to the State, used by many State Water Board Divisions and State agencies. This is intended to harmonize data collection requirements from Senate Bill SB 552 (for Small Communities and Non-transient Non-community Schools), Monthly Conservation Reporting for Urban Retail Water Suppliers, and annual Production and Demand data reporting

from the electronic Annual Report (among others) into one reporting system.

Q2: Will this replace or satisfy electronic Annual Report (eAR) requirements?

A2: Yes. Data supplied on monthly supply and demand values, if provided accurately and for the whole year, will satisfy annual reporting requirements for supply and demand. Starting in the 2023 reporting year for the eAR (due in 2024), this section, currently known as Section 6 – Water Supplied and Delivered, are anticipated to be removed from the eAR.

VIII. Report Deadlines

Q1: What if we cannot compile the necessary data to submit before the deadline?

A1: Your reports will be logged as “past due” and you will not be able to submit the Annual Inventory Report without having submitted all past due reports for that calendar year. We encourage past due reports to be submitted even if it is past the deadline.

Q2: What if we do not have accurate data by the reporting deadline?

A2: Reports can be submitted with preliminary estimates if you do not have verified numbers and can be edited and resubmitted once you have accurate data.

Q3: How do I complete monthly reports if our meters and/or billing are not on a monthly timeline?

A3: Water systems that are metered bi-monthly (once every two months) can be averaged to estimate a monthly metered data and systems that are metered semi-monthly (twice per month) can be combined to estimate monthly metered data. We are currently planning enhancements to the Clearinghouse that will allow water systems to report metered data on variable billing cycles. Please provide the best data you have available.

IX. Concerns with Reporting

Q1: What if these reporting requirements are too expensive?

A1: We understand that reporting requirements can often place a high burden on water systems that are already overtaxed with other regulatory requirements. We believe we are striking a difficult balance between more legislative requirements and placing undue burdens on water systems and would like to hear how we can alleviate these challenges within our constraints. Please contact clearinghouse-reporting@waterboards.ca.gov.

The State Water Board offers assistance for water systems to help complete the Drought & Conservation Reporting through the Water Board’s Division of Financial Assistance Technical Assistance Program.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/docs/2023/ta-request-form.pdf

Q2: Do farmers and Medium or Large Water Suppliers have to report as well?

A2: Yes, all public water systems must report regardless of the size or type of the water system. However, reporting requirements may vary by size and type of system.

Q3: Does Clearinghouse reporting training count as contact training hours?

A3: Unfortunately, no. We cannot offer contact hours for the training but all slides and recordings will be made available on the website.

Q4: What is an example of how this required reporting helps communities?

A4: Data you report can be used to identify water systems that may be at risk of, or are currently, experiencing a water shortage or water outage. The data you report also helps to fulfill new reporting obligations and existing obligations simultaneously by sending them to one location in the Clearinghouse to be utilized by other state agencies, governmental entities, and the public.