

State Water Resources Control Board  
Residential Water Treatment Devices Registration Program  
Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What is a “water treatment device”?**

[Section 116825 of the California Health and Safety Code](#) defines a water treatment device as: “any point of use or point of entry instrument or contrivance sold or offered for rental or lease for residential use, and designed to be added to the plumbing system, or used without being connected to the plumbing of a water supply intended for human consumption in order to improve the water supply by any means, including, but not limited to, filtration, distillation, adsorption, ion exchange, reverse osmosis, or other treatment.”

**2. What types of water treatment devices need to be registered with the California Residential Water Treatment Device Registration Program (RWTD Program)?**

Any water treatment device that meets the criteria in Section 116825(a) of the California Health and Safety Code must be registered with the RWTD Program.

**3. Are water treatment devices required to be “lead-free”?**

Yes. California law prohibits the use of, and introduction into commerce of any pipe, pipe or plumbing fitting, or fixture, such as kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets, and any other end-use devices, intended to convey or dispense water for human consumption through drinking or cooking that is not lead free. The materials for plumbing are not directly regulated by the RWTD Program. Lead materials statutes are contained in [Sections 116875 through 116890](#) of the California Health and Safety Code.

**4. Do water treatment devices that treat only aesthetic effects (taste, odor, hardness, color, etc.) need to be registered?**

No. The RWTD Program registers devices that make at least one claim of reduction/removal of a contaminant that has a federal or California state minimum health standard.

**5. Does a water treatment device need to be registered if it only treats contaminants that do not have a federal/California state minimum health standard?**

No. If a contaminant has a federal or California state minimum health standard, then any residential water treatment device that treat that contaminant must be registered with the RWTD Program.

**6. Are water treatment devices designed for commercial, industrial, or portable use required to be registered?**

No. The RWTD Program only registers devices designed for residential use. We are not currently aware of any registration or certification programs for devices designed and marketed for commercial, industrial, or portable use.

**7. Does a water treatment device's replacement element (component) need to be registered?**

No. The replacement element does not need to be separately registered and must be registered along with the water treatment device. The water treatment device's Performance Data Sheet (PDS) identifies the replacement element, and the certifying organization identifies the replacement element as part of the water treatment device certification. If the replacement element is used with a water treatment device that is not registered with the RWTB Program, then the manufacturer must register that device

**8. If a water treatment device has multiple replacement elements that treat different contaminants, can they be registered as one device?**

No. Each water treatment device with replacement element combination must be registered separately. For example, if a water treatment device has one replacement element that treats only lead and another replacement element that only treats arsenic, the device must be registered twice, once with the replacement element that treats lead and once with the replacement element that treats arsenic.

**9. What are the requirements for a water treatment device to be registered?**

Any water treatment device that makes a health or safety claim of contaminant reduction in drinking water must be registered. A water treatment device must already be certified by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited third-party certifying organization before it can be registered. The water treatment device's PDS, links to the certifying organization's website, and images (scanned images) of the device's exterior packaging are required documentation when submitting an application. More information about the application can be found in our Quick Start Guide. More information about PDS and exterior packaging requirements can be found on our [Information for Manufacturers](#) page.

**10. What is the process for registering a water treatment device?**

A manufacturer's representative must create an account through the [RWTB Portal](#) before they can submit an application. Once your account is approved, you can start an application and add one or more devices to said application. After you have added all devices you plan to register to an application and submit the application, RWTB Program staff will review the application for accuracy. If any discrepancies are found, the application will be returned and all noted discrepancies will need to be fixed before resubmitting the application. If no discrepancies are found, the application will be accepted and an invoice will be sent via email to the representative. Once payment is received, the application will be completed and the devices on the application will be approved for sale/marketing in California. Please see the Quick Start Guide for more details.

**11. How long does the water treatment device registration process take?**

Depending on staff availability and the number of applications being processed, it may take up to 30 calendar days to review an application. The timing for

completing a registration depends on completeness of the application and internal payment processing time.

**12. How much does water treatment device registration cost?**

The current registration fee is \$350.00 per device.

**13. How do I make a water treatment device registration payment?**

Payments can be made online (electronic funds transfer) or manually (check, money order, or cashier's check). Instructions on how to make a payment are provided in the invoice email you receive after an application is accepted.

**14. How long is a water treatment device registered for?**

Registration is valid for the calendar year in which the device is registered. For example, if a device's registration is completed on January 31, 2025, the registration is valid until December 31, 2025.

**15. How does the water treatment device registration renewal process work?**

In mid-December each year, the RWTD Program will send an email to all manufacturers with at least one currently registered device informing them that renewals for the next calendar year are open. Renewing a water treatment device's registration is similar to registering a new device: create an application, add all devices you plan to renew, update device details (if necessary), submit the application, and pay the registration renewal fee once you receive the invoice email.

**16. Where can a water treatment device be certified for its contaminant reduction/removal claims?**

A water treatment device must be certified by an ANSI-accredited third-party certifying organization before it can be registered. National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), International Association of Plumbing Mechanical Official (IAPMO), Water Quality Association (WQA), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and Canadian Standards Association (CSA) are some examples of ANSI-accredited third-party certifying organizations.

**17. Where can a list of registered water treatment devices be found?**

A list of currently registered devices can be found on our [RWTD Program homepage](#) under the "Current Listing of Registered Devices" heading.

**18. What happens if a manufacturer sells or markets an unregistered water treatment device in California?**

Manufacturers that sell or market unregistered water treatment devices in California are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00 per water treatment device per day the device is not registered. Please see [Section 116840](#) of the California Health and Safety Code for more information.

**19. What are the exterior packaging requirements for a water treatment device?**

A water treatment device's exterior packaging must clearly state the contaminant or contaminants the device is certified to reduce/remove. If a water treatment

device treats more than five contaminants, the exterior packaging must list at least five treated contaminants, then provide a link to the device manufacturer's website that shows all contaminants treated by the device. If a water treatment device is certified to treat volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by chloroform surrogate, the manufacturer cannot list the individual chemicals in the list of VOCs unless the device is certified to also treat that chemical separately from the VOCs claim. For example, if a water treatment device is certified to treat VOCs, Benzene cannot be claimed as a treated contaminant unless the device is also certified to treat Benzene as a stand-alone contaminant.

**20. Who should I contact if I have a question that is not covered in this FAQ?**

Please contact our support team via email at [WTDevices@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:WTDevices@waterboards.ca.gov) if you have any questions not covered in this FAQ. If you do not have access to email, please call our support line at (916) 323-0372 and leave a message with your name, callback phone number, and any questions you have regarding water treatment devices.

*(Revised 11/2024)*