



Frequently Asked Questions

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2026 Rulemaking and Regulation Revision

How does the rulemaking affect what I need to do?

For **water year 2026** (October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026), **there are no changes** to what you need to measure or what data you need to submit. For annual reports due January 31, 2027, you will continue submitting data **the same way you**

have been. Annual reporting will be filed on the new California Water Accounting, Tracking, and Reporting System ([CalWATRS](#)).

The updated diversion measurement requirements generally will not become effective until **October 1, 2026**. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) will provide guidance on the updated requirements in the future.

When do I need to comply with the updated requirements?

For **water year 2026**, diverters can continue measuring and submitting data **according to the previous version** of the Water Measurement Regulation (regulation). These requirements are described in sections 939.1 through 939.6 of the [revised regulation](#).

Diverters are required to start measuring their diversions according to the updated requirements of the revised regulation starting **October 1, 2026** and submit the resulting data according to the updated submission requirements on or before **January 31, 2028**.

Why was the regulation revised?

The original water measurement regulation was adopted in 2016 as an emergency regulation to address water diversion data gaps following the 2012 to 2016 drought. The regulation was revised in 2026 in order to help to align requirements with the new [CalWATRS](#) reporting platform, use clearer language, simplify requirements wherever possible, and standardize data formats to improve the quality and usability of measurement data. These changes were needed to successfully implement the goals of the statute and will help the State Water Board be able to more effectively and efficiently administer the water rights system. Please refer to the [Final Statement of Reasons](#) and the regulation's [rulemaking webpage](#) for more information about the regulation revision.

Getting Started

Am I required to measure my diversions?

Please refer to chapter 4 of the [Measurement and Data Submission Manual for Water Year 2026](#) (water year 2026 manual). In general, if you have a claimed water right (including licenses, permits, temporary permits, riparian claims, pre-1914 claims, and registrations) that allows you to divert more than 10 acre-feet per year, you are required to measure your diversions and submit the data to the State Water

Board. You are also required to measure your diversions and submit data if you have multiple claimed water rights that share either a point of diversion, reservoir, or place of use and also allow you to divert a total of more than 10 acre-feet per year combined. If you have a registration (for domestic use, livestock stockponds, irrigation, or cannabis irrigation), you must also measure your diversions and submit the data if you have a storage facility with a capacity greater than 10 acre-feet. How often you must measure and submit data depends on the type and size of your claimed water right or diversion.

For permits, licenses, and registrations, the amount you are allowed to divert is often called the “face value” and it describes the maximum volume of water that is authorized to be diverted under your claimed water right. For pre-1914 and riparian claimed water rights, the amount you are allowed to divert is the maximum volume of water that has ever been diverted in a 12-month period under the claimed water right.

Note: Beginning **October 1, 2026**, the criteria for who must measure their diversions and submit data will change, as described in the regulation text. Additional guidance on this topic is forthcoming.

My face value is more than 10 acre-feet per year, but I actually divert less than 10 acre-feet per year. Do I still need to measure and submit a data file?

In general, yes. Requirements are based on the maximum amount that you are allowed to divert each year. If your water right has a face value greater than 10 acre-feet, you must measure your diversions and submit the data annually, even if you divert less than the maximum amount you are authorized to divert. Please refer to the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#) for additional guidance.

I recently bought a property. Am I required to measure based on the previous owner's use?

Generally, yes, you are subject to the same requirements as the previous owner. If you have data that shows you are consistently diverting less water and should have lower measurement requirements, please contact us at DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov to discuss your specific situation.

Diversion Measurement and Measuring Devices

How do I measure my diversions?

The regulation does not specify any particular methodology or type of measuring device for measuring your diversions. Many diverters may find it easiest to install a flow meter or other type of measuring device at each point of diversion, but any methodology that measures diversions at the required frequency and accuracy is acceptable.

Do I have to directly measure the volume or rate of water diverted?

No, you do not need to directly measure the volume or rate of water diverted, but you must be able to calculate the volume diverted at each timestep based on your measurements.

For example, if you have a reservoir with no consumptive use component or rediversions of released storage water, then your diversion volume may be calculated based on the change in storage over time, e.g., if you directly measure the elevation of water in the reservoir and use bathymetric information to determine the volume of water in storage at each measured elevation, then the volume of water diverted in a given time interval will be the difference in volume between the elevation measurements collected at the end and the beginning of the time interval.

Do I need to install a flow meter?

Not necessarily. While most diverters may find it easiest to have a conventional measuring device like a flow meter at each point of diversion, any device and/or method that accurately collects measurement data at the required frequency and accuracy is acceptable.

Do I need to measure the entire year or just during my diversion season?

You must measure whenever water is diverted or whenever water is withdrawn or released from a reservoir, including any diversions, withdrawals, or releases that occur outside of your designated diversion season. When submitting data, best data practice is to record "0" as the rate and volume for periods when you are not diverting.

How do I measure if I share a point of diversion with other claimed water rights and/or other diverters?

If multiple claimed water rights share a measuring device at a point of diversion, you may measure your diversions together, but you must be able to disaggregate the shared diversion data. Each data file should include measurement data for the specific claimed water right being reported (i.e., each claimed water right must have a unique data file such that together they add up to the total diverted volume). The total combined measurement for all claimed water rights must meet the accuracy requirements, but when disaggregating measurement data among individual claimed water rights, the apportionment may be an approximation.

I have multiple points of diversion. Do I need a measuring device at each individual point of diversion?

The simplest and most accurate way to measure a diversion with multiple points of diversion is often to install a measuring device at each separate point of diversion. However, any methodology that can determine the volume and rate of water diverted at the required frequency and accuracy for each claimed water right is acceptable.

Where can I buy measuring devices and equipment?

The State Water Board does not endorse any specific manufacturer or measuring device. To help assist diverters, we have compiled lists of common [measuring devices](#) and [measuring device vendors](#). These lists are not exhaustive, and other devices or vendors may be acceptable. Please confirm that a device is appropriate for your specific diversion and meets your measurement requirements before purchasing.

Where should I install my measuring device?

Generally, you should install your measuring device as close to your point of diversion as possible, and before any diverted water is used or delivered. Your measuring device must be installed at a location where losses, such as evaporation or seepage, do not significantly affect the accuracy of your diversion measurements.

Who can I contact to install a measuring device?

Only a qualified individual can install a measuring device. You can either hire a qualified individual to install a measuring device or you can complete a training course on water measurement (currently only offered through the [University of California Cooperative Extension](#)) to become a qualified individual yourself. Please

refer to the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#) or chapter 8 of the [water year 2026 manual](#) for more information about qualified individuals.

How and where do I submit evidence of proper functioning for my measuring device?

You can submit evidence of proper functioning for your measuring devices through CalWATRS. Additional information about measuring devices and accuracy requirements will be provided in future guidance materials.

How long is my measurement method or alternative compliance plan valid?

If you submitted a measurement method or ACP to the Board before February 1, 2026, it will remain valid through September 30, 2026. All existing measurement methods and ACPs will expire on October 1, 2026. Before February 1, 2027, diverters must submit a measurement methodology and an ACP, as applicable, to the Board through CalWATRS.

How do I submit an alternative compliance plan?

ACPs forms are available in CalWATRS and are due by January 31, 2027.

If you submitted an ACP to the Board before February 1, 2026, your existing ACP will remain valid through September 30, 2026, and you will not need to submit an updated ACP until January 31, 2027. If you would like to pursue alternative compliance and did not submit an ACP before February 1, 2026, or if you would like to use a different ACP than what you previously submitted, you must measure and submit data according to the updated requirements of the regulation. Information about the updated requirements of the regulation will be provided in future guidance materials.

Data File Format and Submission

If I measure using a measurement method or alternative compliance plan, do I still need to submit a data file?

Yes, regardless of whether you measure your diversions with a measuring device, measurement method, or ACP, you must submit your data with your annual report.

What file type format should I use for my data file?

For **water year 2026**, all data files must be openable using either Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access (i.e., as .csv, .xls, .xlsx, .txt, or .dat files). Optional data file templates and additional guidance on data file best practices are available on the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#).

For data collected **on or after October 1, 2026** (water year 2027 and beyond), you must use the provided data file templates to submit your measurement data. The first annual report that requires use of the provided templates will be due January 31, 2028.

Do I need to submit the calculations I used to calculate the volume of water diverted? How should I report my calculations?

If you perform any calculations to convert the raw output from your measuring device to other values (e.g., to convert from elevation measurements to volume), you should upload your calculations or an explanation of your calculations in addition to uploading your measurement data file as part of your annual report.

Should I submit raw data from my measuring device or QA/QC'd data?

If you perform any calculations or quality assurance protocols on the raw output from your measuring device, you do not need to also submit the raw, unaltered device output; uploading just the final, quality-assured measurement data is sufficient.

How long do I need to keep records of my data?

You must keep records of the raw data from your device for at least 10 years.

How often do I need to submit my data?

You only need to submit measurement data files once per year, as part of your annual report. All water right holders and claimants are required to electronically submit annual reports to the State Water Board on or before January 31st of the subsequent year. For example, annual reports filed for water year 2026 (which extends from October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026) are due by January 31, 2027. The data included in your data file(s) should support the reported diversions in your annual report.

If you are also subject to telemetry requirements, you are also required to post your diversion data to a publicly accessible website weekly. Please refer to the [Telemetry Requirements webpage](#) or chapter 6.3 of the [water year 2026 manual](#) for more information.

Where do I submit my data files?

You will upload your data files when completing your annual reports in CalWATRS. Please refer to the [Submitting Measurement Data in CalWATRS fact sheet](#) for more information.

Qualified Individuals

How can I find information about the Assembly Bill 589 training course to become a qualified individual?

Assembly Bill 589 (AB 589) allows any diverter who has completed the appropriate training through the University of California Cooperative Extension to be considered a qualified individual. More information about this training course is available on the [University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources website](#). The website also includes the contact information of the course instructors if you would like to reach out to them directly.

Are there any other training courses available?

The University of California Cooperative Extension's diversion measurement and reporting course is the only currently approved course for training qualified individuals. Additional courses may be approved in the future and will be announced on the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#).

Do trained field hydrologists need to take the AB 589 training course to be considered a qualified individual?

Depending on the size of your diversion, a field hydrologist may be required to take the Assembly Bill 589 course to become a qualified individual.

For diversions of less than 200 acre-feet per year, a sufficiently trained and experienced field hydrologist can be considered a qualified individual without additional training. For larger diversions, they may need to take the course, unless they are also:

- Working under the supervision of a California-licensed Professional Engineer,
- A California-licensed contractor authorized for C-57 well drilling or C-61 limited specialty/D-21 machinery and pumps,
- A Board-certified water treatment operator or water distribution operator who is trained and experienced in water measurement,
- Professionally employed as a hydrographer, or

- Professionally employed as a water measurement technician.

Please refer to the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#) and chapter 8 of the [water year 2026 manual](#) for more information.

Telemetry/Large Diversion Requirements

What are the telemetry/large diversion requirements?

In addition to measuring diversions and submitting a data file with their annual report, some diverters must also post their data to a publicly accessible website at least once per week. Generally, these diverters are also required to collect measurements on an hourly basis. However, when posting data, measurements may be aggregated to reflect daily values. The data must also be available upon request and be provided in a format that is openable using Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access. Please see chapter 6.3 of the [water year 2026 manual](#) for information about who is subject to telemetry requirements for water year 2026.

Note: Beginning **October 1, 2026**, “telemetry requirements” will be replaced with “large diversion requirements.” Additional information about large diversion requirements will be included in future guidance materials.

Are telemetry/large diverter requirements based on authorized use or actual use?

For water year 2026, telemetry requirements are based on the maximum allowed direct diversion amount and/or rate for either a single claimed water right or a combination of claimed water rights sharing the same point of diversion. For diversions to storage in water year 2026, telemetry requirements are based on the storage facility’s maximum capacity, not the volume of water currently in storage.

Note: Beginning October 1, 2026, large diversion requirements will be based only on the maximum allowable diversion amount or rate, not the capacity of a storage facility.

Is there a specific website where I should post my telemetry/large diversion data?

No, until October 2027, any website that is publicly accessible without login credentials is acceptable for posting telemetry/large diversion data. This website may be owned and maintained directly by the diverter or by a third-party provider.

Beginning October 2027, weekly large diversion data must be submitted through CalWATRS or another authorized website.

If I submit telemetry/large diversion data, do I still need to submit a data file with my annual report?

Yes, you must submit a data file containing your measurement data with your annual report, even if you post your data to a public website each week. The data posted weekly can be provisional data and does not need to be apportioned by water right. Data submitted with your annual report must meet the specified accuracy requirements and be apportioned by water right and diversion type (direct or storage).

Enforcement/Failure to Comply

What will happen if I do not measure my diversion or submit data?

If you are subject to this regulation and you do not measure or report your diversions, you may be subject to enforcement actions, including civil liability up to the maximum per day penalty described in section 1846 of the Water Code.

Please contact the Division of Water Rights as soon as possible and staff will work with you to reach compliance.

Complying is hard. Will the State Water Resources Control Board consider my situation to avoid enforcement?

The Board uses a collaboration-first approach to help diverters come into compliance when a genuine effort is being made to meet requirements.

Who do I contact if I have questions about my Notice of Violation?

Please reach out to the Water Rights Enforcement contact listed in your notice of violation (NOV).

Contact Information

Who can I contact if I have questions about the regulation?

You can email us at DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov or refer to the following phone numbers, depending on your claimed water right:

- *Permits / licenses:* (916) 323-9393
- *Statements of water diversion and use:* (916) 341-5300

- *Groundwater recordation:* (916) 319-0805

Additional Resources

More information about this regulation can be found on the [Water Measurement Regulation webpage](#).

(This FAQ was last updated in February 2026)