

1. PURPOSE

To identify and standardize the process and technical information required to satisfy Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) zoning bylaw “proof of water” requirements at the time of subdivision where a parcel is not to be served by a community water system

Subdivision applicants should consult with a qualified professional regarding the feasibility of ground water to support a proposed subdivision prior to formulating a subdivision plan and prior to submitting a subdivision application.

2. DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this policy are defined in Attachment 1.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies when an RDN Zoning Bylaw requires proof of potable water at the time of subdivision where each newly created parcel is less than 5.0 hectares in area and is not to be serviced by a community water system.
- 3.2 This policy does not apply where a zoning bylaw requires proof of water to the satisfaction of the Provincial Approving Officer (PAO). In these cases, this policy will guide staff in recommending to the PAO that this policy be utilized in its consideration of proof of water during the subdivision process.
- 3.3 For clarity, this policy does not apply where rezoning to facilitate subdivision has previously occurred and the requirements of Policy B1.21 - *Hydrogeological (groundwater) assessment requirements for rezoning un-serviced lands and for development permits (Policy B1.21)* are applicable. *In those cases, proof of water shall be in accordance with the registered Section 219 Covenant and the Final Well Report Requirements contained in Appendix II of Policy B1.21.*
- 3.4 This policy does not apply to subdivision applications where a new source of water is not required including lot line adjustments where no additional density would come as a result of the proposed subdivision.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 The RDN Development and Emergency Services Department, as renamed from time to time, is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this policy are satisfied through the subdivision application review process.
- 4.2 Regular maintenance and testing of private wells and water treatment systems is the responsibility of property owners.

5. POLICY

Acceptable Water Sources for the Purpose of Subdivision

5.1 For the purpose of this policy, only a drilled well or dug well that is constructed in accordance with this policy, or a source of surface water licensed for the intended use will be considered acceptable sources of potable water.

Well Construction, Pumping Test, and Water Quality Test

5.2 A well must be constructed on each proposed parcel, excluding any proposed parcel or remainder that is 5.0 ha or more in area.

5.3 Wells must be constructed in accordance with the Provincial *Groundwater Protection Regulation* and the *Health Hazards Regulation*. Note as per Section 3.1.(2)(b) of the provincial *Sewerage System Regulation*, sewerage system systems must be setback at least 30 metres from wells that supply a domestic water source.

5.4 Each well shall be pump tested and shall undergo a water quality test to determine potability in accordance with the requirements specified in Attachment 2 of this policy, which shall also form the basis of information collected in the Well Information Sheet (WIS).

5.5 The RDN may require proof that the laboratory used to conduct the water quality test is licensed to conduct microbiological testing in accordance with the *Pathogens and Toxins Act*.

5.6 Applicants shall be encouraged to locate wells where they will not restrict or interfere with the potential location of a septic field or the future development of the subject property or adjacent properties.

Well Information Sheet

5.7 Proof of water shall be demonstrated by the subdivision applicant through the submission of a Well Information Sheet (WIS). A WIS is required for each proposed well using a form deemed acceptable to the General Manager.

5.8 The purpose of the WIS is to confirm that a well has been constructed on each proposed parcel, that each well can satisfy the zoning bylaw's minimum year-round potable water supply requirements, and that each well meets the current Provincial *Groundwater Protection Regulation* and the *Health Hazards Regulation*.

5.9 WIS's shall include the information that is required to confirm consistency with this policy as outlined in Attachment 3.

Use of Surface Water Source

- 5.10 Despite the above, a licensed means of surface water may be proposed to satisfy the minimum potable water requirements. Proof that the water license has sufficient capacity for each proposed parcel and that the water extraction is authorized for each of the proposed uses on each parcel must be submitted to the satisfaction of the General Manager.
- 5.11 Water quality sampling and testing requirements outlined above, and all other requirements of this policy shall also be satisfied for use of surface water.

Drinking Water Treatment System Requirements

- 5.12 If water quality tests show treatment is needed to meet potable standards, a qualified professional must interpret the results, determine whether the water is a treatable water condition, confirm treatability, and recommend the appropriate treatment system.
- 5.13 Where a drinking water treatment system is required, the RDN shall, as a condition of the issuance of a subdivision compliance letter, require the applicant, at the applicants' expense to register a Section 219 Covenant on title indicating that a drinking water treatment system is required to be installed and confirmed to be operational prior to occupancy of a dwelling unit or final inspection of a building as applicable. Where a drinking water source is capable of delivering untreated water during power outages, the treatment system shall be provided with a reliable power supply that is capable of operating the drinking water treatment system during power outages.
- 5.14 Notwithstanding the above, where the treatable water condition is applicable only to specific parcels within a proposed subdivision, the RDN may support registration of the required covenant concurrent with the final plan of subdivision where the applicant has provided a letter of undertaking to the satisfaction of the General Manager.
- 5.15 Where an exceedance of the Maximum Acceptable Concentration of any measured substance is observed, the RDN may refer the water quality testing results to the Medical Health Officer for information and comment.

Existing Wells

- 5.16 Where there is an existing well located on a parcel that was constructed on or after November 1, 2005, that an applicant is proposing to utilize to satisfy potable water requirements for the purpose of subdivision, the applicant must demonstrate that the well meets the current construction standards as outlined in the *Groundwater Protection Regulation*, the distances to potential source of contamination as required by the *Health Hazards Regulation*, and provide a WIS in accordance with this policy.
- 5.17 Where there is an existing well located on a parcel that was constructed prior to November 1, 2005, that an applicant is proposing to utilize to satisfy potable water requirements for the

purpose of subdivision, the applicant must demonstrate that the well meets the an equivalent to the current construction standards as outlined in the [*Groundwater Protection Regulation*](#), the distances to potential source of contamination as required by the [*Health Hazards Regulation*](#), and provide a WIS in accordance with this policy.

- 5.18 Wells that have not been in service for a period of five or more years and are not proposed to be utilized should be decommissioned in accordance with [*Best Practices for Decommissioning Water Wells*](#) and the [*Groundwater Protection Regulation*](#) as amended or replaced prior to the issuance of a subdivision compliance letter.
- 5.19 Wells that have been constructed that are determined to not have an adequate yield of potable water shall be decommissioned in accordance with [*Best Practices for Decommissioning Water Wells*](#) and the [*Groundwater Protection Regulation*](#) as amended or replaced prior to the issuance of a subdivision compliance letter and shall be referred to the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.
- 5.20 Where an existing well has been constructed to current standards and a previous pumping test has occurred, provided the pumping test satisfies the requirements of this policy and was not conducted more than 3 years ago, the RDN may accept it.
- 5.21 Proof that existing wells have received a well tag number from the Province or have received a licence from the Province shall be required as applicable. Despite the above, an alternate means of confirming licensing requirements have been met may be accepted to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

6. PROCESS

- 6.1 Proof of water at the time of subdivision should follow the process outlined in the diagram located in Attachment 3 of this policy.

7. COMPLIANCE

- 7.1 A subdivision compliance letter shall be withheld until the requirements of this policy have been satisfied.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that amendments to proposed plans of subdivision may be required to demonstrate that each proposed parcel will be serviced with potable water in accordance with this policy.

Department	Current Planning	Approval Date	
Resolution No.		Amendment Date(s)	
		Next Scheduled Review Date	

Attachment 1
Definitions

“Applicant” means a person who has made a subdivision application with the RDN.

“Board” means the Regional District of Nanaimo Board of Directors.

“Drinking Water Treatment System” means a device(s) certified as meeting the applicable American National Standards Institute/National Sanitation Foundation (ANSI/NSF) performance standard that is used to mitigate drinking water parameters that exceed the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality to provide potable water service to an entire building(s) or development as applicable.

“General Manager” means the Regional District of Nanaimo General Manager of Development and Emergency Services or equivalent position.

“Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality” means Health Canada Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality—Summary Tables. Water and Air Quality Bureau, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada, Ottawa, Ontario 2025, as amended.

“Island Health Drinking Water Quality Parameters” means the Source Water Quality Parameters published by Island Health which are available as follows:

- i. Groundwater (Shallow Wells, Deep Wells, Springs) - available online at www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2018-04/minimum-water-sampling-parameters-groundwater.pdf as amended.
- ii. Surface Water - available online at www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2019-05/minimum-water-quality-surface-water.pdf as amended

“Minimum Year-Round Volume of Potable Water” means the minimum yield that can be sustained each day throughout the year.

“Potable Water” means a source of water from a groundwater well or surface water source that meets or exceeds the parameters established by the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality established by Health Canada, 2025 as amended or at minimum the Island Health Drinking Water Quality Parameters.

“Pumping Test” means pumping test as defined in the Groundwater Protection Regulation, as amended.

“Qualified Professional” means a registered well driller, registered well pump installer or person working under the direct supervision of the well driller, well pump installer or other professional with competence in hydrogeology who is responsible for the construction and testing of the well with experience in and acting within their field of expertise.

“RDN” means the Regional District of Nanaimo.

“Treatable Water Condition” means written confirmation from a qualified water treatment professional

that is based on the results of a water quality test demonstrating that the source water can be treated, using a commercially available drinking water treatment system to provide potable water and in the case of residential development that such drinking water treatment system can be reasonably operated and maintained by the average homeowner to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

“Well Information Sheet” means a written document containing confirmation of a well’s sustainable yield or production rate and water quality which is submitted on a form deemed satisfactory to the General Manager.

“Water Quality Sample” means the collection of a representative water sample sourced from a groundwater well or surface water source by a Qualified Professional utilizing the required sampling procedures to be used for analysis to determine its chemical, physical, and biological characteristics.

“Water Quality Test” means the written results or an analysis of a water quality sample sourced from a groundwater well or surface water source prepared by a laboratory registered with the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation (CALA), which measures the parameters listed in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, 2025 or the Island Health Drinking Water Quality Parameters, as amended from time to time.

“Zoning Bylaw” means a Regional District of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw adopted in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

Attachment 2
Well Information Sheet Requirements

Subdivision applicants shall provide the information required to demonstrate proof of water through the submission of a Well Information Sheet (WIS) for each proposed well. WIS's shall be in a form deemed acceptable to the General Manager.

The following information and confirmation of the specified procedures shall be included on a Well Information Sheet (WIS).

1. *Confirmation that a well has been constructed on each proposed parcel including:*

- a) a general description of the location of the well;
- b) the depth of the well;
- c) the date when each well was drilled;
- d) well plate number;
- e) if available, the well tag number as indicated on the stainless-steel plate secured to the well and correlated to the Provincial well identification database;
- f) confirmation that the well was constructed in accordance with the current minimum standards as outlined in the [Groundwater Protection Regulation](#) under the Provincial *BC Water Sustainability Act* and the [Health Hazards Regulation](#); and,
- g) attach the drillers log.

2. *Confirmation that pumping test has been conducted including:*

- a) that a pumping test was completed during the months of July through October (lowest water table);
- b) that the pumping test has been completed by a registered well driller, registered pump installer or person working under the direct supervision of the well driller, pump installer or professional with competency in hydrogeology, in accordance with the protocols outlined in the [BC Guide to Conducting Well Pumping Tests](#);
- c) that a Qualified Professional designed, performed or directly supervised and interpreted the pumping test;
- d) that the duration of the pumping test is consistent with the pumping test design and the [BC Guide to Conducting Well Pumping Tests](#);
- e) that the well capacity satisfies the zoning bylaw's minimum year-round volume of potable water;

- f) despite the above, the General Manager may support pumping tests that occur during the months of November through June if a professional hydrogeologist, geologist, or qualified engineer's report confirms the well is in a highly productive aquifer with minimal seasonal variation and is estimated to meet the zoning bylaw's year-round potable water requirements; and,
- g) notwithstanding above, tests on dug wells must be conducted only through the months of July through October (lowest water table).

3. Confirmation of Potable Water Quality Test Results

- a) A representative water sample from the well must be collected by a qualified professional. The water sample must be tested by a laboratory certified by the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation (CALA) within the acceptable timeframe between the sample collection and testing dates.
- b) The water quality tests must measure the parameters listed in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality or at minimum the Source Water Quality Parameters published by Island Health which are available as follows:
 - iii. Groundwater (Shallow Wells, Deep Wells, Springs - [Microsoft Word - Source Water Assessment Guideline - June 21 2023](#) as amended
 - iv. Surface Water - [minimum-water-quality-surface-water.pdf](#) as amended
- c) The WIS must indicate if any of the measured parameters exceed the guidelines or maximum acceptable concentrations contain in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality. Where there are exceedances, a qualified professional with experience in potable water treatment shall provide recommendations for appropriate mitigation / treatment to achieve a potable water quality.

4. Signatures

The WIS must be signed and dated by the responsible professional(s), the subdivision applicant, and agent if applicable.

**Attachment 3
Process for Proof of Water**

The following outlines the process for satisfying the proof of water requirements of this policy following issuance of a Preliminary Layout Review/Preliminary Layout Approval from the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

