

STEP 4 Identify roles and responsibilities

It is important for the residents in any size community to know who to contact about their water supply and under what circumstances. Water service provision in Indigenous communities is tiered.

In large communities or town-supplied communities, a regional council or water utility may oversee the supply and may be responsible for reporting water supply management or monitoring compliance with the ADWG in accordance with legislative requirements for their state or territory.

The day-to-day operation of a small water supply is often carried out by the residents or Essential Service Officers (ESOs). Being on-site, they are able to keep a constant eye on the system and respond quickly. Small outstations or homelands generally do not have a service provider to whom reporting of water management practices or compliance is required.

Use the 'Water Supply Services and Assistance' worksheet as a template to identify who is accountable for the water supply and the administrative level of responsibility.

The aims of this step

- Identify who is responsible for what and who should be contacted when a hazard or risk is identified.

At the end of this step

- participants will readily identify between a water quality issue and an infrastructure issue
- participants will know who to contact under what circumstance for assistance
- participants will know the overarching regulatory requirements and who is responsible for what.

Preparation

The 'Water Supply Services and Assistance' activity sheet shows the overarching roles and responsibilities for providing water services in Indigenous communities. It is important for participants to understand the difference between a water quality (or health) issue and an infrastructure or water reliability issue because different responses will be required.

For this step you need to understand that there are two situations when a community may need to seek advice from authorities:

- There is a risk to public health (water quality).
- There is a water supply failure (water infrastructure).

Package materials	Additional materials	Estimated time
'Water Supply Services and Assistance' activity sheet for the relevant state or territory	Textas, pencils	3 hours
'Emergency Contacts' poster	Contact details for all service agencies	

TIP

- › Pose scenarios of a health incident and a water system failure to explore with the group who should be contacted. The aim of the activity is to encourage discussion, so make sure that no one person is blamed during the exercise.

What to do

Select the poster for the community's state or territory. The blue side of the poster shows agencies involved with water quality. The grey side of the poster shows the agencies involved with infrastructure. The water quality pathway is shown in blue and the water infrastructure pathway is shown in grey.

Begin at the orange circle in the middle that represents the community (small, large or town-supplied). Follow the pathways from the community and discuss the activities or responsibilities for each person and agency on the activity sheet.

Fill in the contact details for each person and agency on the activity sheet.

Discuss who in the community is responsible for the management activities previously identified in steps 2 and 3. Discuss who can be a back-up and what residents should do under different circumstances. Participants must know which agency to contact.

Western Australian Water Supply Services and Assistance.

WATER QUALITY

The Water Quality pathway (blue) starts from a central orange circle representing the community. It branches into three types of communities: Town Supplied Communities, Large Remote Communities, and Small Communities. From these, it connects to various agencies: WA Water Corporation, WA Department of Health, WA Water Services Licensing Act, ADWG (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines & Community Water Planner), Essential Services Officer, Regional Service Provider, and WA Department of Housing. The diagram also includes icons for 'Laws About Water' and a glass of water.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Water Infrastructure pathway (grey) starts from the same central orange circle. It branches into the same three community types and connects to the Resource Agency and Remote Area Essential Services Program. The diagram also includes an icon of a water tower.

Where you live
Community name:
Phone:

Sampling and daily tasks
Name:
Phone:

Water quality monitoring
(keeping an eye on it - reports to WA Health Department)
Name:
Phone:

Water quality regulation
(checks laws are followed)
Name:
Phone:

Laws and guidelines
for water quality and health

WQRA
water quality research outlooks

Where you live
Community name:
Phone:

Surveillance and daily tasks
Name:
Phone:

Repairs, operation and works
(keeping it going)
Name:
Phone:

Coordinates service provision
Name:
Phone:

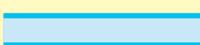
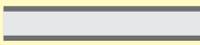
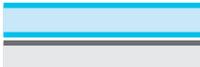
Assets and infrastructure
(checks that rules for water storage, repairs and services are followed)
Name:
Phone:

Town-supplied communities have a main water supply that is connected to a major centre or town. It is not a separate community water supply.

Large communities usually have a population of more than 100 people with a service provider that manages and maintains the water supply.

Small communities usually have a population of less than 100 (in some regions a small community has less than 50 people) with a standalone water supply managed by a resource agency or by the residents.

Legend

	The blue line with a dark blue edge represents the pathway for organisations that provide water under state or territory regulations. The pathway shows the reporting and accountability between the service provider and the health department. These regulations are bound by laws.
	The light-blue line represents the pathway for advice on water quality, but this is not a pathway of regulation.
	The grey line is the pathway for infrastructure and hardware. The infrastructure must be built to comply with standards.
	The light-blue line with the dark-blue edge, together with the grey line, represents a service provider that looks after the infrastructure and also provides water that must meet regulations.
	<p>The light-blue boxes show the main water supply laws that apply to providing drinking water.</p> <p><i>The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> were developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Limits for all contaminants in water are set at levels to protect public health, using best available information with considerable safety factors included.</p> <p>The CWP is incorporated into the <i>Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> and is the appropriate method for small communities to provide and manage drinking water.</p>

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

FIRE BRIGADE	000	or	LOCAL BRIGADE	PHONE:
AMBULANCE	000	or	LOCAL MEDICAL CENTRE	PHONE:
POLICE	000	or	LOCAL POLICE STATION	PHONE:
FLYING DOCTOR	000	or	NEAREST BASE HF RADIO FREQUENCY: CALL SIGN:	PHONE:
WATER SERVICE PROVIDER			NAME:	PHONE:
HEALTH DEPARTMENT			NAME:	PHONE:
COMMUNITY OFFICER			NAME:	PHONE:

An emergency is an unexpected change to your water supply that could make you sick and requires immediate action.

WHAT TO DO

1. Risk assessment — walk water supply and do all checks.
2. Identify problem and check management plan.
3. Tell others in community what they need to do.
4. Notify authorities.
5. Fix problem if possible.

<p>MICROBIOLOGICAL eg. dead animal in the water. Tell others:</p> <p> "Don't drink mains water." "Use alternative supply or boil water before drinking."</p>	<p>CHEMICALS eg. petrol spill in water. Tell others:</p> <p> "Don't drink mains water." "Drink alternative water supply."</p>	<p>NO WATER or not enough water, eg. bore pump broken. Tell others:</p> <p>"Use alternative supply." "Save water for most important uses like drinking and cooking."</p>
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Water supply emergencies could be caused by:



MICROBIOLOGICAL	CHEMICALS	NO WATER or not enough
Dead animals or sewage in water, treatment system not working because power out or storm damage, increase in turbidity after rain reducing treatment effectiveness.	Fuel, fertilizer or pesticide spilt in water, ash and firefighting foam in water after fire, toxins from algal bloom.	Power failure , generator out of fuel , pump switched off, pump short circuits , broken pipes, damage from floods or earthquakes , pipes melted in fire , tanks run dry in drought .

The 'Emergency Contacts' poster gives examples of the kinds of situations or events when the community may need assistance. Fill in the contact details for support agencies in the area provided on the poster.

Finishing up

Step 4 completes the water management planning process.

Before you leave:

- Get copies (with permission) of the water supply checklist for first community visit, the community map, the CWP management plan, the asset management activity sheet, the water supply services activity sheet and the step-wise improvement list. Seek permission if you intend to give these to service agencies to help them target their support.
- Make sure that participants understand that the process is finished and the terms of any future work are clear.

Legal requirements for drinking water suppliers

Every community must be aware of the responsibilities of supplying water. Communities with a private supply are responsible for adhering to legal requirements.

A water management plan for small communities must:

- outline the back-up support available
- state who to contact in times of emergency
- include having signs and a communication plan prepared to alert residents if the supply has been contaminated.

Under Australia's constitution, water quality is a state and territory responsibility. This means that the government has responsibilities or obligations to ensure that water that is safe to drink is supplied. If you do not have your water supply provided by a water utility or shire council, you have a private water supply.

If you supply water to other people, such as visitors, or if you use water for food production, you have a duty of care towards customers for the safety of the water you supply.

If you think the water you supply may be unsafe, you may be required to:

- put up signs that say, 'Non-potable water: do not drink'
- advise people to boil all water for drinking
- provide bottled water
- advise visitors to bring their own water.

Seek advice from your health department if you are at all unsure about your obligations as a private water supplier.