



## For Planners, Builders and Developers: Identifying a Community Water System (CWS)

Pennsylvania's Safe Drinking Water Act (35 P.S. §721.1 *et seq.*) (Act) and regulations at Title 25 Pa. Code Chapter 109 require the permitting and regulation of Community Water Systems. This fact sheet will assist you in determining whether a new facility, multi-unit housing complex, planned development or phased subdivision meets the definition of a Community Water System (CWS).

### What is a CWS?

A CWS is a public water system (PWS) that serves at least **15** service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least **25** year-round residents. A seasonal facility that meets the above criteria is a CWS if it provides water for at least 60 days a year.

### What is a PWS?

A PWS is a **system** that provides water to the public for human consumption, and which has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year.

- The term includes collection, treatment, storage and distribution facilities under control of the operator of the system and used in connection with the system. The term also includes collection or pretreatment storage facilities not under control of the operator that are used in connection with the system.
- Water for human consumption includes water that is used for drinking, bathing and showering, cooking, dishwashing or maintaining oral hygiene.

### How is the term "system" defined?

A system is a group of facilities used to provide water for human consumption including facilities used for collection, treatment, storage and distribution. The facilities shall constitute a system if they are adjacent or geographically proximate to each other and meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

- The facilities provide water to the same establishment, which is a business or commercial enterprise or an arrangement of residential or non-residential structures having a common purpose and includes mobile home parks, multi-unit housing complexes, phased subdivisions, campgrounds and motels.
- The facilities are owned, managed or operated by the same person.
- The facilities have been regulated as a single public water system under the Act.

It is not the intent of DEP to regulate as a PWS an establishment or arrangement of 15 privately owned homes, each with its own individual water supply well. However, any other ratio or combination of homes to private wells other than a 1:1 ratio may constitute a PWS.

### How is the minimum number of persons or service connections determined?

A system providing water for human consumption to year-round residents is considered a CWS if it serves either 25 persons or 15 service connections. For multi-family structures, the number of service connections is equal to the number of units. A system that has fewer than 15 service

connections may still be a CWS based on the number of individuals served. For a new facility, multi-unit housing complex, planned development or phased subdivision, the final design must be considered when classifying the water system. If the proposed system has been approved to serve at least 25 people or 15 service connections, then it meets the definition of a CWS.

**What if I plan to purchase all of the water for my new facility or planned subdivision from an existing PWS?**

You may still meet the definition of a PWS if you perform any one of the following activities:

- Resell the water,
- Provide treatment to meet a drinking water standard, or
- Provide drinking water to an interstate carrier.

**Why is it important to contact DEP early on for a new or modified system?**

New or modified systems are required to comply with all permitting requirements and obtain DEP's approval for all water supply facilities prior to construction. Water supply facilities include sources, treatment, storage and the distribution system. All facilities must meet DEP's design and construction standards. All sources must be adequately sited and constructed in order to obtain the highest quality source available, and to protect the source from existing or foreseeable sources of contamination and causes of diminution. If you are considering a new system or making modifications to an existing system, contact your local DEP Regional Office.

For more information, visit [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us), keyword: Drinking Water.