



COMPARISON OF STATE AND FEDERALLY APPROVED WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

Current as of December 9, 2009

IMPORTANT NOTE TO READER: This summary of regulations has been prepared by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and does not constitute an official version of these regulations, nor does it necessarily reflect current law. If any discrepancy is found between this booklet and the Alaska Administrative Code, the Code should be considered the final authority, unless the discrepancy is the result of an error in the Code.

State Water Quality Standards (WQS) must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they can be used in Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) actions such as NPDES wastewater discharge permits, Total Maximum Daily Load allocations, and CWA Section 303(d) impaired waterbody listings.

The following table summarizes the differences between 2009 Alaska WQS (see note 2 below) and WQS effective for Federal purposes. For all other Alaska WQS, use the 2009 Alaska WQS for all purposes. This table was developed by DEC and EPA WQS staff.

WQS	State Approved Criteria	Federally Approved Criteria
Mixing zones (all uses)	2009 Alaska WQS ¹ 18 AAC 70.240	2003 Alaska WQS ² except for 3Q2 flow condition 18 AAC 70.240-270
Natural conditions (all uses)	2009 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.010(d)	2003 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.235(b)
Residues (all uses)	2009 Alaska WQS fresh marine 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)	2003 Alaska WQS fresh marine 18 AAC 70.020(b)(8) and (20)
Bacteria for use (2)(B)(i) and (2)(B)(ii) (marine water contact recreation and secondary recreation)	2009 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) (2)	<i>EPA 1986. Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria</i> Geometric mean of 35 Enterococci per 100 mL, and single-sample maximum based on intensity of use EPA's 2004 Bacteria Rule: 69 FR 67217-67243

WQS	State Approved Criteria	Federally Approved Criteria
Fluoride for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	1999 Alaska WQS ³ 18 AAC 70.020(b) 2.0 mg/L
Odor for use (1)(A)(i) (drinking water criteria)	(removed in 2003)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) 3 threshold odor number
Mercury for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria)	2008 Toxics Manual ⁴ 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) Note 5 ⁵ 2.4 µg/L acute (total recoverable) 0.012 µg/L chronic (total recoverable)
Selenium for use (1)(C) (freshwater aquatic life criteria))	2008 Toxics Manual 18 AAC 70.020(b)(11)	1999 Alaska WQS 18 AAC 70.020(b) Note 5 ⁶ 20 µg/L acute (total recoverable) 5 µg/L chronic (total recoverable)
Carcinogens for uses (1)(A)(i) and (iii), (1)(B)(i) and (ii), (1)(C), (2)(A)(i), (2)(B)(i) and (ii), and (2)(C) and (D)	2008 Toxics Manual	40 CFR 131.36

¹ “2009 Alaska WQS” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards” as amended through September 19, 2009, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/pdfs/18%20AAC%2070.pdf>

² “2003 Alaska WQS” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards” as amended through June 26, 2003, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/70mas.pdf>

³ “1999 Alaska WQS” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “18 AAC 70 Water Quality Standards” as amended through May 27, 1999, and available at http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/18_AAC_70_WQS_May27,1999.pdf

⁴ “2008 Toxics Manual” refers to the Department of Environmental Conservation document entitled “Alaska Water Quality Criteria Manual for Toxic and Other Deleterious Organic and Inorganic Substances” as amended through December 12, 2008, and available at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/pdfs/Alaska%20Water%20Quality%20Criteria%20Manual%20for%20Toxic%20and%20Other%20Deleterious%20Organic%20and%20Inorganic%20Substances.pdf>

⁵ Adoption by reference of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Mercury – 1984, EPA 440/5-84-026.

⁶ Adoption by reference of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Selenium – 1987, EPA 440/5-80-070.