

# Water Quality Standards

<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/water/wqsar/trireview/trireview.htm>

## 2003-2005 Triennial Review

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## Residues Criteria Fact Sheet

### ***What are residues?***

Residues are defined as floating solids, debris, sludge, deposits, foam, scum, or any other material or substance remaining in a water body as a result of direct or nearby human activity. The water quality standards criteria for residues address substances that are not dissolved in the wastewater and may remain in the waterbody for some period of time.

Examples of residues include foam from seafood processing facilities, seafood processor waste that settles to the bottom and decomposes rapidly, and bark waste at log transfer facilities that decomposes slowly. Some residues may contain toxic substances which are also addressed by other water quality criteria. Other residues may be biodegradable or may create a suitable surface for new aquatic life communities over time.

### ***Why change residues criteria?***

The proposed changes conform to narrative criteria recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency.

### ***What are the proposed changes to the residues criteria?***

The proposed criteria would prohibit residues that

- form objectionable deposits, taste or odor,
- constitute a nuisance, or
- result in undesirable or nuisance species.

The proposed criteria would address aesthetic concerns by introducing the concepts of “nuisance” and “objectionable”. These concepts come from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality guidance documents (the “Gold Book” and the “Water Quality Standards Handbook”). Whether a residue is a “nuisance” or “objectionable” would be a site-specific determination based on the potential for conflicts with water body uses. Land use plans, other resource management plans, and user complaints would also be considered.

For example, floating debris and foam may constitute a nuisance by attracting flies or

birds or causing an unpleasant appearance or odor that would make people avoid using the water even if the water is healthy. Objectionable deposits may create an unpleasant substrate (waterbody floor), odors, or other conditions that make people avoid using the water. Residues which cause adverse effects to aquatic life and wildlife would also be considered objectionable since it would impact the established water use for growth and propagation of fish, shellfish, other aquatic life and wildlife.

### ***What about films, sheens, discoloration, and toxic effects of residues?***

Residues that cause a film, sheen or discoloration are regulated by criteria for petroleum, hydrocarbons, oils and grease, and criteria for color. Any potential for adverse effects from residue containing toxics are regulated by the criteria for toxic substances. The revised regulations are intended to provide criteria that are enforceable and address the potential nontoxic and largely aesthetic effects caused by residues.

### ***Who would be affected?***

- Seafood processors, log transfer facilities, and other wastewater dischargers would be affected because they have permitted residues discharges.
- Public water users.

### ***How are the criteria used?***

The residue criteria, like other water quality criteria, are used for:

- Wastewater discharge permitting and compliance;
- Water body assessment where the Department evaluates whether a waterbody supports the designated uses of the waters;
- Waterbody recovery plans; and
- Enforcement actions for water quality violations.

### ***What's Next?***

The public comment period ends December 22, 2005. These proposed changes will be the topic of a public hearing. If you have questions about the changes, please contact Nancy Sonafrank at [Nancy\\_Sonafrank@dec.state.ak.us](mailto:Nancy_Sonafrank@dec.state.ak.us). The hearing will present an opportunity for the public to comment orally. The public will also have the opportunity to comment in writing. The hearing date and location will be published on our website at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/trireview/residues.htm>.