

Green Facts

New classification system for Permit to Take Water (PTTW) applications

All water taking applications are classified based on their potential risk to the environment or potential to interfere with other water users. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the ministry before submitting a permit application to initially confirm the classification for the proposed water taking. Not all water takings pose the same level of risk for environmental impact or interference. Classifying permit applications using a risk-based approach allows the ministry to focus on applications for takings which have a higher potential to cause adverse environmental impacts or interference. This approach to categorizing and assessing permit applications improves environmental protection and helps ensure the viability of the water source for all users.

What are the categories for water takings?

Permit applications are classified as either Category 1, 2 or 3 takings.

Category 1 takings have a lower risk of adverse environmental impacts or interference, they are:

- permit renewals of existing water takings for the same or lesser amount, for the same purpose, and from the same location and source, provided the continued taking is not likely to have adverse environmental impact or interference; and
- some new takings provided they meet criteria set out in the PTTW Manual and Applicant's Guide (for example, some ponds not connected to nor receiving water from a surface water source).

Category 2 and Category 3 takings have a greater potential for causing adverse environmental impacts or interference and therefore receive a higher level of evaluation, they include:

- new and increased water takings that are not Category 1 takings;
- existing takings where the permit holder has been asked to submit additional scientific studies that require an evaluation by the ministry to assess potential impact;
- an existing taking that a Director has determined may cause adverse environmental impacts or interference.

What are the requirements for permit applicants?

Permit applicants are required to classify their proposed water taking using the environmental criteria set out in the PTTW Manual. Potential impact on water flows and water quality are examples of environmental criteria to be considered when classifying a proposed water taking. Applicants must submit detailed information about the planned taking, the water source and related factors such as water conservation measures. Permit applicants are encouraged to consult with the ministry before submitting their application.

Category 2 applications must be accompanied by a schedule completed by a qualified person who certifies that the proposed water taking is a Category 2 taking. Category 3 applications require the applicant to submit the appropriate scientific studies prepared by a qualified person for ministry review.

How will the ministry evaluate a proposed water taking?

The ministry will confirm the classification and evaluate the water taking proposal to determine if it meets with the PTTW principles including protecting the natural functions of the ecosystem, preventing unacceptable interference with other users, and fair sharing and conservation of the resource.

The Water Taking and Transfer Regulation requires the ministry to refuse permits for new or increased water takings that remove water from watersheds that already have high levels of use. Maps of high and medium use watersheds are available on-line at www.ene.gov.on.ca. Water transfers out of a water basin are prohibited under the regulation.

The ministry may also consult with other agencies, such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, local conservation authorities and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources before making a decision about issuing the permit.

Who determines if a permit will be issued?

The ministry will determine whether or not to issue a permit. For Category 1, 2 or 3 water takings, the ministry places standard conditions, as well as site-specific conditions where appropriate, to ensure any environmental impacts are minimized and to prevent unacceptable interference with other water users.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please refer to the *Permit to Take Water Manual* and the *Guide to the Permit to Take Water Application Form*. These and other PTTW publications are available on-line at www.ene.gov.on.ca or at the regional offices listed below.

General information on the PTTW program is also available through the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800/565-4923 or within the Toronto calling area at 416/325-4000.

Ministry of the Environment Regional Offices

Eastern Region (Kingston)
Tel. 613/549-4000 or 1-800/267-0974

Central Region (Toronto)
Tel. 416/326-6700 or 1-800/810-8048

Northern Region (Thunder Bay)
Tel. 807/475-1205 or 1-800/875-7772

West Central Region (Hamilton)
Tel. 905/521-7640 or 1-800/668-4557

Southwest Region (London)
Tel. 519/873-5000 or 1-800/265-7672

The original application, supporting information, and the application fee must be sent to:

The Ministry of the Environment
Attention: Permit to Take Water Director,
Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch
2 St. Clair Avenue West, Floor 12A
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1L5
Telephone: Toronto calling area at 416/314-8001 or
toll free at 1-800/461-6290.