



STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

Quarterly Newsletter For Maine Water Systems

July 2026



Operator Rule Change

The Board of Licensure of Water System Operators (BLWSO) is proposing changes to its Water System Operator Licensing Rule. The changes include an increase in the license fee for all license renewals which may take effect in October. The licensing fees would increase to \$95 for initial licenses and two-year license renewal (Initial Licensure, Initial Licensure by Reciprocity, and Biennial Renewal of License).



Cost was \$75

New cost \$95

The BLWSO is supported by the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program, established within the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

To see the proposed rule changes check out:
<https://tinyurl.com/90-429-CMRChapter-1>

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Created in partnership by:

Maine Public Utilities
Commission

&

Maine Department
of Health and Human
Services,
Drinking Water
Program



Drought – 5 steps to take now

1. If you have a sensitive source, encourage or incentivize rain barrels in your communities.
2. Educate on best practices for irrigation and lawn care.
 - Watering in the early morning
 - Raising the mower blade to at least 3 inches (or its highest level) will help grass roots grow deeper and hold more moisture.
3. Make sure your terms and conditions have information about mandatory conservation measures in case you ever need to implement them. If not, you must follow chapter 620 of the PUC rules.
4. Work on having redundancy in sources/interconnections.
5. Make sure your rates are designed in a way that promotes conservation (for example- lower the quantity of water associated with your minimum usage charge).



LEAD Grant for Public Schools

In response to school lead test results from 2021-2022, the MEDWP has established the Lead Elimination for Academic Development (LEAD) Grant. The LEAD Grant offers reimbursement for the purchase of a maximum of five water bottle filling stations to filter out lead in drinking water.

Schools must request approval for funds by **July 31st 2026** and complete installation by May 31st 2027. This deadline may be extended if funds remain.

Schools can sign up by [clicking here](#). 

For more information on the LEAD Grant, please contact Sarah Fundaun at Sarah.Fundaun@maine.gov.

For more information on the law that required testing in all Maine schools or to see individual school results check out our website: <https://tinyurl.com/leadschoolmaine>.



A customer complained to the PUC. Now what?

The PUC has a Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (CASD) that fields complaints. They investigate complaints involving a customer dispute with a utility where the parties have been unable to resolve it on their own. In 2025, they received almost 13,000 calls and of those calls, 1,732 of those calls were complaints. Very few of those complaints were related to water (2.5%). Complaints are handled in the order they are received and certain times of year are much busier than others (such as in the early spring when electric customers start being disconnected for non-payment during the winter months).



If a customer complains about your utility the first thing the PUC will do is ask if they have reached out to the utility first. If they have, then the PUC will reach out to the utility to gain their perspective and then compare the information with the applicable rules and the utilities terms and conditions.



Another type of complaint the PUC receives is called a 10-person complaint. The reasons for this type of complaint could be if customers feel there is unreasonable or discriminatory practices, service is inadequate, or if service can not be obtained. The PUC will allow all parties to attempt to resolve the complaint to their mutual satisfaction before considering opening any investigation. For more, see 35-A M.R.S. § 1302. To speak with the CASD, call 800-452-4699.

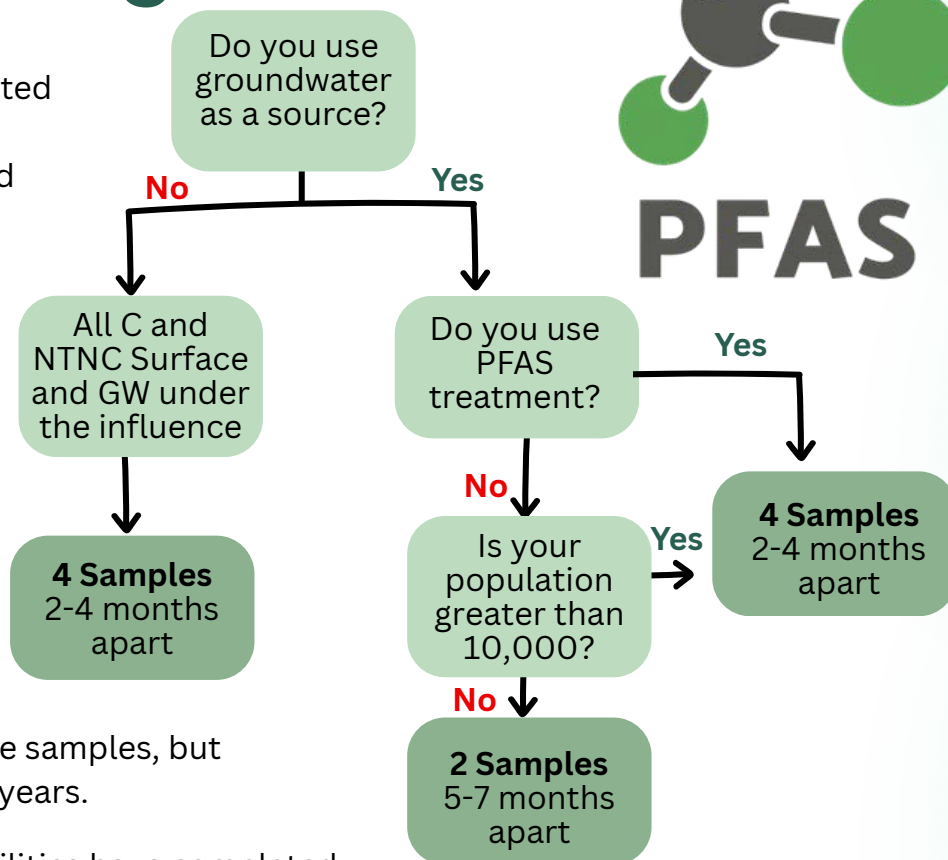
Loans and the PUC

The Commission issued an Advisory Ruling in April, finding that it does not have statutory authority to approve or deny requests from consumer-owned water utilities (COU) to authorize the issuance of securities under 35-A M.R.S. § 901. This means if a COU wants to take out a loan and it goes through the proper channels at the utility, the PUC does not need to weigh in on it or approve it even if it says you need to in your charter. The only exceptions are certain types of leases and loans that are collateralized using utility property (such as a secured loan).



PFAS Sampling

In December 2025, Maine adopted EPA's 2024 PFAS regulations, requiring all community (C) and non-transient non-community (NTNC) water systems to complete initial monitoring by **April 26, 2027** and meet compliance with the rule by **April 26, 2029**. To complete initial monitoring, systems must sample a specific way from each of their entry point sources. To capture seasonality for PFAS levels, there is specific timing for these samples, but they can span across different years.



As of June 2026, 374 system facilities have completed this initial monitoring. Systems that have not completed their initial monitoring should have received a letter from the DWP regarding their initial sampling status for PFAS. After April of 2027, systems will be moved to ongoing compliance monitoring frequencies and notified of this change.



Non-detect results- eligible for 3-year sampling.



Results above the detection level but reliably and consistently below the MCL may be eligible for annual testing.



Results over $\frac{1}{2}$ the MCL will monitor quarterly for at least 4 quarters. If their average is below the MCL, then a system may be eligible for annual testing.

For more information email Courtany.Hanley@maine.gov, or call (207) 592-2168 or Jasmine Bouchard: email Jasmine.Bouchard@maine.gov or call (207) 441-7748



Cert Tracker

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How many more
TCHs do I need to
renew my
license?

Introducing Cert Tracker

Recently, the Operator Certification at the Maine DWP upgraded their licensing software to GEC's Cert Tracker. This new and improved software gives more control to drinking water operators over their licensing accounts. Want to check on your Training Contact Hours (TCH) to see how many more you need to renew? Great! That can be done by simply logging into your account and reviewing your TCHs. Want to renew and pay online? Perfect! That will also be possible. We will also be adding an email submission option for our operator processes. Great way to save on processing time and postage!

If you have specific questions regarding a license submitted during this transition period, please reach out to dwplicensing.dhhs@maine.gov.

Things to be aware of during this transition:

- There will be delays in issuing licenses while we learn and get comfortable with the new software.
- It is important you read communications coming from the DWP regarding licensing updates.
 - Communications coming shortly about how to set up your account, and other resources so you feel comfortable with these changes.
 - There will be technical support resources available, but you can always ask us questions directly during this process.
 - Key to success will be getting your account set up early so you are ready for renewal season!

Stay tuned for
additional
information!



Growth- Who pays?

If your utility voted not to invest, then the customer pays for new mains and service lines.

A utility can also impose a System Development Charge (SDC) on new customers for infrastructure that is needed due to growth. This would include new storage tanks, larger mains, or a new source. This gets approved by the PUC and is separate from rates. This can help place the cost of the utility sizing up on the people that are causing the need. Check out [35-A M.R.S. §6107](#) for more.



Want to learn more?

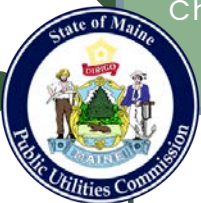
The PUC and Wayne Brockway from Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District are putting on a **FREE** training on System Development Charges in Waterville on July 23, 2026 from 9-12. If you are interested in attending please email Christina.L.Bilodeau@maine.gov to get added to the attendee list.



This newsletter has information for a variety of water systems and not all of them are regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Additionally, Information provided doesn't necessarily apply to all water system types. It intended for informational purposes only. This information is not legal advice and does not set any legal standard. Regulated public utilities must comply with Maine law and regulations and should consult with legal counsel for interpretation of laws and regulations.

Maine Public Utilities Commission

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Maine CDC Drinking Water Program

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