

# Water Act: Temporary Water Diversions

## FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

### Temporary Diversion Licence (TDL)

Before diverting and using surface water and groundwater in Alberta, a licence must be obtained under the province's Water Act. A temporary diversion licence provides authority for this diversion, for a maximum of one year.

This licence identifies the source of water supply, location of the diversion site, allocation of water allowed from the source(s) and the conditions under which the diversion and its use must take place.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining rights-of-access to lands where the temporary diversion is being proposed

### Reasons to apply

When there is a need for a short-term diversion and use of water for emergency water supply; for dust control and bridge washing; for drilling oil and gas wells (drilling fluid) and for other short-term uses except those exempted under Schedules 3 and 4 of the Water (Ministerial) Regulation and the Water Act.

Under Section 65 of the *Water Act*, a copy of the temporary diversion licence must be kept at the diversion site(s) or in water hauling vehicles.

### How to apply

- **New!** [Apply Online – click here](#)
- Submit an application form or letter by fax, mail or e-mail to an Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) District Office, or
- Provide the required information by telephone, or
- Apply in person to the District Office.

### Information that will be required

Information that will be required:

- Name, address and telephone number of the person responsible for the diversion,
- If applicable, name, address, and telephone number of a contact person,
- Identify the surface or groundwater supply (by name where possible),
- Legal land description of the diversion site(s),
- Volume of water to be diverted,
- Approximate start and end date of the diversion,
- Reason for the diversion.

When reviewing your application, the Director may request additional information such as:

- Legal land description where water will be used or where water is released to a water body,
- Proof of landowner consent, and
- Other, site-specific information.

### Selecting a Source of Water

If the diversion is from a dugout, borrow pit or other excavation, indicate if the diversion is located on a water body, replenished by overland flow and/or maintained/replenished by groundwater.

If selecting a surface water source, the Department recommends seeking water bodies where a withdrawal will have minimal impact on the aquatic environment. Recommended sources are: surface runoff dugouts, sloughs and non fish-bearing lakes and creeks. Fish-bearing lakes and creeks are least recommended.

Keep a copy  
of the TDL at  
the pump site,  
or in the water  
truck.

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### Diversions without a Licence

These types of diversions do not require a licence:

- Statutory household use
- Traditional agriculture use
- Fire-fighting
- Wells equipped with hand pumps
- Operating an alternative watering system, using surface water for livestock that are generally grazed
- Dugouts which collect surface runoff (see *Water Act*: Dugouts fact sheet)
- Hydrostatic testing of pipelines for water diversions up to 30,000 cubic metres (a Code of Practice Notification is required for this)
- Other uses where exempted under Schedules 3 and 4 of the *Water (Ministerial) Regulation* and *Water Act*.

For further information on exemptions, please contact the nearest Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) District Office.

### Other Information

Generally, water entering an intake pipe leading to pumps must pass through a screen with openings no larger than 2.54 mm.

Until appropriate regulatory and authorization systems are in place, ESRD will not issue any land use dispositions that expressly permit the diversion of water. Therefore, the diversion and use of water, including diversion and use of water less than 5000 cubic metres in the non-settled areas (Green Area), will be authorized through a TDL. Please refer to [Information Letter 2013-01](#) for more information.

In some cases, land use dispositions may still be needed for surface access to water diversion sites.

### Temporary Diversion Licence Process

To apply, complete and submit an Application under the Water Act for a Temporary Diversion Licence application form. The application form can be found at the Alberta Environment web site location

<http://environment.alberta.ca/01189.html>

**New!** Submit a Temporary Diversion Licence application directly online and eliminate the need to submit a paper application.

Click here to find out how to register a new account and enroll in Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's online Temporary Diversion Licence application (WATERS):

<http://environment.alberta.ca/03657.html>

### Enforcement

Anyone who conducts an activity in a water body, or diverts water without the appropriate authorization under the Water Act, may face enforcement action with a maximum fine of up to \$50,000 for an individual and up to \$500,000 for a corporation.

If you witness or have information about a potential environmental emergency or a complaint, contact the Environmental Hotline at 1-800-222-6514. This is a 24-hour emergency line and your anonymity is guaranteed.

Some  
diversions are  
exempt

Environmental  
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1-800-222-6514