



Frequently Asked Questions: Drinking Water Tank Inspection Reporting

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2019

GENERAL

What is a water tank?

Water tanks help deliver pressurized water to buildings with more than six floors. Pumps push water to rooftop tanks where the water is stored until needed. When a faucet is opened in the building, water exits the tank and gravity carries the water to the floors below to be used.

Which types of water tanks are covered by the New York City Health and Mental Hygiene's (the Health Department) inspection and reporting requirement?

The requirement applies to any tank used to store or pressurize a building's drinking water. If the building has a dual-purpose water storage tank that includes a fire suppression system and a drinking water supply system, the tank must be inspected because some of the water is used as drinking water.

Which types of water tanks are *not* covered by the Health Department's inspection and reporting requirement?

Water storage tanks that are separate from the drinking water supply system, such as a stand-alone fire suppression tank, are not subject to this requirement. Domestic hot water heating tanks are also not subject to this requirement.

Why does the Health Department require buildings to test water tanks and report the results?

Many New York City buildings store drinking water in tanks. The Health Department wants to make sure that drinking water tanks are free of harmful bacteria that could make residents sick.

What annual deadlines apply?

The tank must be inspected at least once each calendar year, January 1 to December 31. The inspection can be done at any time during the calendar year. Regardless of when the inspection is done, the owner must make sure that the water tank inspector submits the report electronically or on paper by the close of business on January 15 of the following year. For example, regardless of whether an inspection happens on January 1, 2020, December 31, 2020 or any date in between, the report must be submitted by January 15, 2021.

My building does not have a drinking water tank but received a reminder from the Health Department about performing an annual inspection. What should I do?

If your building does not have a tank used to hold drinking water but received a reminder from the Health Department, the owner or a representative should notify the Health Department. There are two ways to do this. The first is to use the online Water Tank Inspection Reporting application (<https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration/dohmh/DOHMHService.action>). The second is to send a letter by mail or email to the Health Department. The letter should include the building address, the Building Identification Number (BIN), contact information for the building owner (including address, email and phone number) and a statement that the building's water supply system does not include a tank. It should be emailed to watertanks@health.nyc.gov or mailed to:

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Building Water System Oversight
Water Tank Inspection Reporting
42-09 28th Street, CN-56
Long Island City, NY 11101-4132

What are the City regulations that govern water tanks?

The relevant City regulations for drinking water storage tank inspections are the New York City (NYC) Health Code, Article 141, [Section 141.07](#), [Chapter 31](#) of Title 24 of the Rules of the City of New York (Commissioner's Regulations) and [Section 17-194](#) of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

The regulations that govern the design, cleaning and disinfection of water storage tanks are the NYC Health Code Article 141, [Section 141.09](#) and the NYC Construction Code, Plumbing Code, Chapter 6 [Section 606.5](#).

Parts (d)-(f) of code [Section 141.07](#) describe the requirements for public notice of inspection results, corrective action upon identification of unsanitary conditions and enforcement policies regarding failure to submit inspection reports.

CONDUCTING DRINKING WATER TANK INSPECTIONS

[NEW] Who can perform a water tank inspection?

A qualified water tank inspector must conduct the inspection. To be qualified, an inspector must either be a licensed master plumber according to Article 408 of Chapter 4 of Title 28 of the NYC Administrative Code, work under the direct and continuing supervision of such a licensed master plumber or be a licensed professional engineer or architect design professional as defined in Section 28-101.5 of the NYC Administrative Code.

What must the water tank inspection include?

The inspection must include all activities on the Health Department's inspection reporting form. A printable version of the inspection report can be found online (<http://www.nyc.gov/health/watertanks>).

Part (b) of NYC Health Code [§141.07](#) provides a description of the required inspection activities. These include general inspection requirements (assessing the condition of the internal and external tank structures, pipes, access ladders, roof, access hatches and screens), sanitary inspection requirements (assessing the presence of sediment, biological growth, floatable debris or insects and rodent/bird activity in or around the tank) as well as "bacteriological" sampling (collecting a sample and analyzing for the presence of harmful bacteria). The inspection report must also include a description of all unsanitary conditions and corrective actions. If a water tank or its supporting structure is structurally unsafe or dangerous, the water tank inspector or owner shall take actions as required by the NYC Administrative Code §28-301.1 and report such condition to the Department of Buildings in writing.

§17-194 of the NYC Administrative Code also states that the Health Department may require additional documentation including photographs or videos which show the interior and exterior of the water tank or receipts of work orders.

What does "bacteriological" mean?

Bacteriological means relating to bacteria. The Health Department is concerned about "Coliform" bacteria. If Coliform bacteria are found in a building's drinking water, the storage tank from which the sample was collected may be contaminated and require cleaning and disinfection.

What are the requirements for bacteriological sampling?

Bacteriological water quality samples must be conducted in accordance with the Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater and must be analyzed and reported by a laboratory that is certified by the State of New York through the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) to perform potable (drinking) water analyses. A listing of currently certified ELAP laboratories can be found online (<http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elap/comm.html>).

Any sample which indicates the presence of Coliform or E. coli must be reported to the Health Department within 24 hours and the necessary corrective actions, such as cleaning and disinfection, must be taken immediately. The Health Department may be contacted by email at watertanks@health.nyc.gov.

REPORTING DRINKING WATER TANK INSPECTIONS

[NEW] Who reports water tank inspection results to the Health Department?

The water tank inspector must submit the water tank inspection results to the Health Department. It is the building owner's responsibility to make sure that the required yearly inspection is conducted and that the inspector reports to the Health Department on time.

How is the report submitted to the Health Department?

The most convenient way to submit is to enter inspection data into the Health Department's online Water Tank Inspection Reporting site (<https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration/dohmh/DOHMHService.action>). In order to complete the form, the water tank inspector will need to register with a valid email address. After registration, partially completed reports can be saved and finished at a later time. Multiple tanks at a single building should be included in the same inspection report submission.

As an alternative, a paper form can be found online (<http://www.nyc.gov/health/watertanks>) and mailed to the Health Department (see address below). Partially completed inspection reports will not be accepted.

What are the additional requirements for submitting a paper form?

Paper forms must be completed using a digitally or mechanically typed font; handwritten forms are not accepted. Any paper form deemed incomplete or otherwise unacceptable will be returned to the sender and will not be considered as documentation of the required annual inspection. Paper inspection reports for buildings with more than one water tank must use the "multiple tanks" form. Mail paper inspection reporting forms to:

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Building Water System Oversight
Water Tank Inspection Reporting
42-09 28th Street, CN-56
Long Island City, NY 11101-4132

What are the additional requirements for submitting the paper "multiple tanks" form?

When submitting a paper form for a building with more than one water tank on the premises, the specialized "multiple tanks" form must be used. The multiple tanks form is separated into two sections, the first section ("cover sheet") must be completed once for the building address, and the second form ("results sheet") can be printed out multiple times to provide the required reporting form for each tank located at the building.

If a person owns more than one building, how are the inspection results reported?

Building owners must ensure that a separate reporting form is submitted by the water tank inspector for each building with a unique Department of Buildings-issued BIN that uses a tank to store drinking water. For example, if a building owner owns three separate buildings, each with a unique BIN and each with a drinking water tank, the water tank inspector would need to file three separate reports.

Who is required to keep a copy of the inspection report?

Both the water tank inspector and the building owner must keep a copy of the report for at least five years from the date of inspection. A copy of the completed report can be printed from the online Water Tank Inspection Reporting "review report" screen. If the Health Department or a building resident asks for the results of an inspection report, the water tank inspector or building owner must supply it within five business days.

WATER TANK CLEANING

[NEW] Who is qualified to perform water tank cleaning, painting, or coating?

The cleaning, painting or coating of a water tank must be conducted by either a licensed master plumber or an individual working under the direct supervision of a licensed master plumber; a registered engineer or architect; a person who holds a commercial pesticide applicator certification in Category 7G issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; or, an individual who works under the direct supervision of a person holding such Category 7G certification.