

# New Jersey Surface Water Quality Standards N.J.A.C. 7:9B

March 2020

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Pinelands



The Surface Water Quality Standards are developed and administered in conformance with requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act 33 U.S.C. §1251 (also called the Clean Water Act) and the Federal regulatory program established by the USEPA at 40 C.F.R. Part 131.

The Surface Water Quality Standards are also developed pursuant to the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A et. seq. and the New Jersey Water Pollution Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10A et. seq.

Wetlands



**Surface Water Quality Standards** establish designated uses, classify streams based on uses, designate antidegradation categories, and develop water quality criteria to protect those uses. In addition, the standards specify general, technical, and interstate policies, and policies pertaining to establishment of water quality-based effluent limitations.

**Designated Uses:** Uses identified in the SWQS include: drinking water supply, fish consumption, shellfish resources, propagation of fish and wildlife, recreation, agricultural, and industrial water supplies.

Highlands



**Stream Classifications:** Surface waters are classified based on designated uses. New Jersey has both fresh and saline waters. Freshwaters are classified as FW1 (not subject to any man-made wastewater discharges) and FW2 waters (all other freshwaters). Waters within Pinelands Protection and Preservation areas are classified as pinelands waters (PL). Freshwaters are further classified based on trout status; trout production (FW2-TP), trout maintenance (FW2-TM), and non-trout (FW2-NT). Saline waters are classified as saline estuarine (SE) and saline coastal (SC). SE waters are further classified into SE1, SE2, and SE3 based on the designated uses.

**Antidegradation Designations:** There are three levels of antidegradation designations: Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW), Category One waters (C1), and Category Two (C2) waters. All waters of the State are classified and assigned with one of the three antidegradation designations. Each stream is designated with a classification and antidegradation designation.

Saltmarsh



**Water Quality Criteria:** These are developed for individual pollutants to protect aquatic life (plants and animals that live and reproduce in water) and human health in both fresh and saline waters. Criteria are developed to protect water quality for designated uses, including survival, growth, and reproduction of aquatic life, and drinking water and fish consumption for human health protection.

Coastal Waters



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**Finding stream classifications and/or Category One designations:** Stream classifications and antidegradation designations are listed in the Surface Water Quality Standards (SWQS) at N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.15 (found at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/rules/>). Streams are listed alphabetically within the appropriate drainage basin (Atlantic, Delaware, Passaic, Raritan, and Wallkill). If a stream is not listed, find the next named stream it drains into. Unnamed and unlisted streams, in general, take the classification of the streams they drain into. All Category One streams are listed in the SWQS. N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.15(b) explains how to determine the classification of unnamed and unlisted streams. The Department's interactive mapping tool (accessible through <http://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/> or <http://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/apps.html>) is also helpful in identifying stream classifications and antidegradation designations. Directions on how to use the interactive mapping tool can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/>.

**Water Quality Criteria applicable to different classifications:** Criteria can be found in the SWQS at N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.14. Criteria are calculated to protect a variety of designated uses. A criterion is a calculated value of a parameter at which no adverse effects are caused in aquatic life or human health. Acute and chronic criteria are calculated to protect aquatic life in fresh/salt water. Human health criteria are calculated to protect humans from drinking water (freshwater) and fish consumption (fresh/salt water). Different criteria may be applicable to different stream classifications. For example, the criterion for dissolved oxygen is different for trout production, trout maintenance, non-trout, SE, and SC waters.

## Implementation

**New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) rules at N.J.A.C. 7:14A:** In calculating water quality based effluent limitations for point source discharges, the Department considers the size of the receiving stream, the volume of wastewater, current levels of pollutants in the receiving stream, and effluent characteristics. This determination is evaluated as part of the permit issuance. Visit [www.nj.gov/dep/dwq](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq) for more information.

**Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules at N.J.A.C. 7:13:** 300 foot riparian zone imposed through Flood Hazard Area Control Act rules permits to all C1 waters and their upstream tributaries within the same sub-watershed or HUC 14. Visit [www.nj.gov/dep/landuse/](http://www.nj.gov/dep/landuse/) for more information.