

Complying with your water permit to take water from a bore, stream or dam

Introduction

It would be great if water resources were endless and everyone could take as much water as they wanted without thinking about the consequences.

Unfortunately, that is not a reality. In many parts of the Auckland region the demand for water exceeds local supply, putting pressure on resources.

This fact sheet provides water users with basic information about complying with a water permit. It also outlines the responsibility water users have in terms of managing their local water resources.

Managing Auckland's water resources is a balancing act between:

- Providing water for industry, agriculture and domestic uses
- Protecting water for other uses e.g. wildlife, ecosystems, recreation, Tāngata Whenua, the community and future generations.



■ Conditions of your water permit

Your water permit is a contract between you and the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) outlining the conditions under which you are allowed to take water. These terms focus on minimising the adverse effects of your water take on other water users and the environment.

■ **Most water permits include conditions regarding...**

- The maximum amount of water you can take per day, week, month or year
- Installing and maintaining a water flow meter
- Reading your water meter and returning the readings to us
- Maintaining access to your bore for water level and water quality testing
- How or when your permit may be reviewed before it expires

■ **Please read your water permit**

■ Why are water permit conditions monitored?

■ **To minimise the adverse effects on the environment and between permit holders by:**

- Ensuring the quantity and rate of water use is within the limit of your permit
- Maintaining groundwater quality by preventing pollutants from the well-head and providing access for water measurements

■ **To gather information needed to manage our water resources by:**

- Finding out how much water is used in the entire catchment
- Measuring the effect of use on a stream or aquifer
- Checking to see if more water is available to meet demand
- Evaluating the outcome of plans and policies

■ **To meet cultural and community expectations about environmental quality by:**

- Maintaining the ability of the water resource to meet everyone's needs
- Reporting to the public on the state of the region's water resources
- Providing the public with information on how to help us better manage those resources
- What do you have to do?

■ **The conditions on your water permit make it your responsibility to ensure:**

- A water flow meter is operating at all times
- The meter is accurate to the ARC's standards and replaced or recalibrated if not.
- Meter readings are recorded regularly and forwarded to the ARC
- (For bores) access to the borehead for groundwater quality and water level sampling is always available. The borehead is well maintained to prevent groundwater contamination
- You keep within your allocation
- Compliance with any other conditions as per your water permit

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We all depend on water and we all have a role to play in sustaining the region's resources for now and in the future. As a resource consent holder you have a responsibility to comply with your water permit conditions. This benefits the resource that benefits you and ensures a water supply for future generations.

■ What do you get out of it?

- Monitoring your own meter will keep your costs down (if we have to make an unscheduled compliance visit we will charge you)
- Awareness of your water use
- Maximum water use efficiency from being able to identify leaks and other problems around the property.
- You will be able to verify your actual water requirements against your allocation (because annual consent charges are partly based on allocation, you can reduce your allocation if you use less water – and save on fees.

■ What the contract means for the ARC

Our role is to ensure that Auckland's water resources are not compromised by the take.

Under the terms of your water permit, our contract with you means we:

- Maintain a database of all the information on water use to help sustain the resource and for reporting to the public
- Analyse and present your water use data at your request
- Identify where consent holders are not complying with the conditions of their water permit and help them comply. If necessary, we will enforce compliance
- Analyse water use returns to review the amounts allocated
- Regularly review how much water should be available for allocation from a water resource, and the effect of water takes on that resource

Under the Resource Management Act (1991) (RMA 1991), the ARC has specific powers to obtain information from consent holders so we can report to the public. Good information is crucial in the promotion of sustainable management of natural resources.

We aim to make realistic allocations that are easy to comply with and that will sustain water resources for the future. Phone the ARC on 09 366 2000 and press 1 if circumstances change or the allocation is inadequate.

■ What happens if you don't use your water permit?

If you are not using water, you don't have to read your meter, but you must send in a meter reading when requested. You have to comply with conditions such as maintaining your borehead and water meter. You are obliged to pay your annual consent charge regardless of whether you are using water because the fee is partly based on allocation.

If you don't plan to use the water allocated to you, you can surrender your permit (you don't need a permit for stock drinking and domestic use). This frees up water for other users. If a new owner wants to take water again, they will need to apply for a new permit.

■ What happens if you don't comply?

Conditions are intended to avoid adverse effects on the environment and help us manage water resources fairly and efficiently.

Your water permit is a legally binding contract. You are obliged to comply with all the conditions of the consent that can be enforced under the RMA. If we have to force you to comply with conditions, we will charge you any costs incurred.

Enforcement can and will be used, depending on the degree, frequency and duration of non-compliance and the extent of the effect on the environment and other users.

■ Education is better than enforcement

Better communication and education can prevent most of the adverse environmental effects stemming from non-compliance of consent conditions. Please read the conditions of your resource consent. Ask us to help with any questions.

We can help with:

- Explaining how to comply with your permit conditions
- Advice on where to obtain water meters
- Showing you how to read your meter and fill in the meter form
- Arranging to do record-keeping online, by email or via our website
- Discussing how you can use your water more efficiently

■ For more information

The ARC has a range of fact sheets concerning taking, using or diverting groundwater. Copies are available online at www.arc.govt.nz or upon request. Topics include:

- Using water wisely
- Geothermal water
- Groundwater and bores
- Why you have to fit a water meter
- What's all this about dams?

How do I contact the ARC?

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