

**Clarification of Definitions of Public Water Systems**

Division: DDAGW  
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**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this guidance is to clarify the definitions of public water systems (PWSs).

**II. BACKGROUND:**

To assure consistency, the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters wants to clarify the definitions of public water systems. The categorization of a public water system as a transient, or non-transient, non-community water system has been applied differently by the five district offices.

**III. GUIDANCE:**

In order to have consistent working definitions of the different types of public water systems, the following is established:

**A. Public Water System**

1. A public water system is one which has at least 15 service connections or where at least 25 people daily have access to the water any 60 days out of the year.
2. Agricultural Labor Camp: Any water supply system serving an agricultural labor camp as defined in section 3733.41 of the Revised Code is a public water system.
3. Restaurants, Food Preparation, Etc.: A restaurant meeting the definition of a public water system given in (A.)(1.) above only qualifies as a public water system if it serves water to its patrons; provides water for human consumption, such as water for hand washing, which is commonly supplied in public rest rooms; serves its food on plates that will be washed; or uses water to prepare food items. The washing of food preparation utensils alone does not qualify a system as a public water system.

**B. Transient, Non-Community Water System (TNCWS)**

1. To be classified as a transient, non-community water system, at least 25 people daily (not necessarily the same people) must be present and have access to the water any 60 days out of the year.

**C. Non-Transient, Non-Community Water System (NTNCWS)**

1. Schools, pre-schools and day care centers will be classified as non-transient, non-community water systems if they meet the public water system definition and operate for at least six months out of the year. These systems were specifically identified by USEPA, in explaining the definitions of public water systems, as systems that were intended to be regulated as non-transient, non-community water systems, regardless of the specific days of attendance.
2. Places of Employment where at least 25 of the same people (individuals that are expected to be in attendance from day-to-day) have access to water at least 4 days

per week for at least 6 months out of the year will be regulated as non-transient, non-community water systems. At least 25 of the same people must have access to water on a given day. For example, even though a business may employ more than 25 people, at least 25 of the same people must be present at the business at least 4 days per week for at least 6 months per year to be classified as a non-transient, non-community water system. Daily employee population is the key.

#### **IV. HISTORY:**

The Division of Drinking and Ground Waters issued the initial guidance, Clarification of Definitions of Public Water Systems, on June 1, 1998.