



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation (pursuant to Senate Bill SB 88)

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## GETTING STARTED

### 1. WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST?

The first step in understanding your measurement and reporting requirements is to understand what kind of water right or claim of right you have. Requirements are based on the size and nature of your right – so understanding those basic pieces of information is important. The Division of Water Rights (Division) maintains a [Water Rights Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#) and [Know Your Water Right Guide](#) to help diverters understand their water right(s). Please consult these pages for additional information or contact Division staff at [dwr@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dwr@waterboards.ca.gov) if you have any questions.

## 2. AM I REQUIRED TO MEASURE AND REPORT?

In general, if you divert or store more than 10 acre-feet per year, you are required to measure and report your diversions. How often you must measure and report depends on the type and size of your water right or diversion.

If you use a single point of diversion for multiple rights, please refer to Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation Compliance Manual](#) (Manual) for more information.

## 3. HOW DO I MEASURE AND REPORT MY DIVERSIONS?

If the Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation (Regulation) applies to you, you must do each of the following:

- Determine how you will measure your diversion (refer to Section 5 of the [Manual](#))
- Verify that your measurement approach meets the specified accuracy requirements (refer to Section 6 of the [Manual](#))
- Register your Measuring Device, Measurement Method, and/or Alternative Compliance Plan (ACP) by filing a Report of Measuring Device, Measurement Method form, and/or ACP form, respectively (refer to Section 8 of the [Manual](#))
- Measure your diversion at the required frequency (refer to Section 4 of the [Manual](#))
- Prepare a datafile of measurement data (refer to Appendix A of the [Manual](#))
- Submit your datafile(s) with your Annual Water Diversion and Use Report (Annual Report) (refer to Section 8 of the [Manual](#))

Some diverters are required to telemeter their diversion data. If you are required to telemeter your measurement data, you must also adhere to additional requirements. Please refer to the [Telemetry Requirements webpage](#) and Section 6.3 of the [Manual](#) for more information.

## 4. THE FACE VALUE OF MY WATER RIGHT IS MORE THAN 10 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR, BUT MY ACTUAL DIVERSIONS ARE LESS THAN 10 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR. DO I STILL NEED TO MEASURE AND SUBMIT A DATAFILE?

In general, yes. Requirements are based on what you are allowed to divert each year. If the Regulation applies to you based on your face value or other criteria, you must measure your diversion and report the data annually, even if you diverted 0 acre-feet. Please refer to the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#) for additional guidance.

### **5. DO I NEED TO MEASURE THE ENTIRE YEAR OR JUST DURING MY DIVERSION SEASON?**

You must measure throughout the entire year. If no diversion occurred for all or part of the year, the data would simply report that 0 acre-feet of water was diverted at each time step during that period. The Division is currently evaluating alternative ways of reporting no diversions.

### **6. I RECENTLY BOUGHT A PROPERTY. AM I REQUIRED TO MEASURE BASED ON THE PREVIOUS OWNER'S USE?**

Generally, yes, you are subject to the same requirements as the previous owner. If you have data that shows you are diverting less water and should have lower reporting requirements, please contact us at [DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov) to discuss your specific situation.

### **7. DO I NEED TO HAVE A PHYSICAL MEASURING DEVICE TO COMPLY WITH THE REGULATION?**

Not necessarily. There is some flexibility in how you measure your diversion, depending on the size and type of water right. There are three main ways you can meet the measurement requirements:

- Install a Measuring Device
- Use a Measurement Method
- Implement an ACP – a plan that proposes and outlines alternative ways to comply with the measurement and reporting regulation

You may also use a combination of one or more of these options. Please refer to Section 5 of the [Manual](#) for more information regarding options to measure.

### **8. HOW LONG IS MY MEASUREMENT METHOD AND/OR ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE PLAN VALID?**

Each Measurement Method and ACP is valid for five years, and then it must be renewed. Measurement Methods and ACPs can each be renewed by submitting a Measurement Method Renewal form or an ACP Renewal form on the Division's [Form and Survey Submittal Portal](#) (Survey Portal) before it expires. Please note that the renewal forms are a separate form from the initial registration forms.

## ***DATAFILE FORMAT AND SUBMISSION***

### **9. IF I HAVE A MEASUREMENT METHOD OR ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE PLAN, DO I STILL NEED TO SUBMIT A DATAFILE?**

Yes, regardless of whether you measure your diversion(s) with a Measuring Device, Measurement Method, or ACP, you must submit your data with your Annual Report. Datafiles must be in a format that can be opened in either Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access.

### **10. WHAT FILETYPE FORMAT SHOULD I USE FOR MY DATAFILE?**

Please submit datafiles as .csv, .xls, .xlsx, .txt, or .dat files. All datafiles must be openable using either Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access. Datafile templates and additional guidance on datafile best practices are available on the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#).

In general, all datafiles should be formatted to include descriptive column headings in the first row, the measured data with units and the corresponding date and time of measurement, the volume of water diverted at each time interval, and any data flags identifying and correcting known or suspected errors. Additional information can be found in Appendix A of the [Manual](#).

### **11. I AM UNABLE TO DIRECTLY MEASURE THE VOLUME OF WATER DIVERTED. USING THE TEMPLATES, CAN I LEAVE THE VOLUME FIELD BLANK?**

Please do not leave the “volume diverted” field blank. You do not need to directly measure the volume of water diverted, but you must be able to calculate the volume diverted at each timestep based on your measurements.

For example, if you have a storage facility with no consumptive use component or rediversions of released storage water, then your diversion volume may be calculated based on the change in storage over time, e.g., if your raw measured storage value went from 20 acre-feet to 25 acre-feet in a given time interval, with no use of the water, then the volume diverted at that timestep would be 5 acre-feet.

### **12. DO I NEED TO REPORT OR PROVIDE THE CALCULATIONS I USED TO CALCULATE THE VOLUME OF WATER DIVERTED? HOW SHOULD I REPORT MY CALCULATIONS?**

In addition to your datafile, you should upload your calculations or an explanation of your calculations to your Annual Report (refer to Appendix A of the [Manual](#) for more

information). If you're using a Measurement Method, you must explain your calculations in your Measurement Method form and submit it through the [Survey Portal](#).

### **13. SHOULD I SUBMIT RAW DATA FROM MY MEASURING DEVICE OR QA/QC'D DATA? WHAT IF THERE WAS A PERIOD DURING MY DIVERSION SEASON WHEN MY MEASURING DEVICE DID NOT FUNCTION PROPERLY?**

Please submit both the raw, unaltered data output from your Measuring Device and/or Measurement Method as well as a separate column containing values correcting for known or suspected errors as appropriate, i.e., quality-assured/quality-controlled (QA/QC'd) values. Please flag any missing measurements or data known to be incorrect. Use the corrected or QA/QC'd value in any subsequent calculations (e.g., to determine the volume of water diverted). It is recommended that QA/QC be done as early as possible after the measurement data is collected, and no later than the submittal of the Annual Report. If you need to repair or replace your Measuring Device, the installation and calibration must be done by a Qualified Individual.

### **14. WHAT IS THE "QA/QC MEASUREMENT VALUE" COLUMN IN THE DATAFILE TEMPLATE? IS IT REQUIRED?**

The QA/QC column is there with the understanding that sometimes devices are imperfect and can give false recordings. The QA/QC column allows you to manually flag data that is known or suspected to be incorrect. If your data is not accurate to within 10 to 15 percent, you may need to recalibrate or repair your device (please review the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#) or [Manual](#) for your specific requirements).

### **15. HOW LONG DO I NEED TO KEEP RECORDS OF MY DATA?**

You must keep records of your measurement data for at least 10 years.

### **16. HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO SUBMIT MY DATA?**

You only need to submit measurement datafiles once per year, as part of your Annual Report. All water right holders and claimants are required to electronically submit Annual Reports to the State Water Board by **February 1st of the subsequent year**. For example, Annual Reports filed for water year 2024 (which extends from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024) are due by February 1, 2025. The data included in your datafile(s) should support the reported diversions in your Annual Report.

If you are subject to additional telemetry requirements, you are also required to post your diversion data to a publicly accessible website weekly. Please refer to the [Telemetry Requirements webpage](#) for more information.

### **17. WHERE DO I SUBMIT MY DATAFILES?**

Please upload your datafiles under the “*Manage Measuring Devices and Upload Measurement Data*” section of your Annual Report. If you measure your diversion using an ACP, please upload your datafiles as attachments in the “*Additional Information*” section. Annual Reports are accessed and completed via the [Report Management System](#) (RMS).

## **MEASURING DEVICES**

### **18. WHERE CAN I BUY MEASURING DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT?**

[A list of vendors and suppliers](#) of water measurement devices and equipment is available for your convenience, though any device that meets the specified requirements is acceptable. Please confirm that a device is appropriate for your specific diversion and meets your measurement requirements before purchasing.

### **19. WHERE SHOULD I INSTALL MY MEASURING DEVICE?**

Each Measuring Device should be located either at the point of diversion or between the point of diversion and the place of use.

### **20. WHO CAN I CONTACT TO INSTALL A MEASURING DEVICE?**

Only a Qualified Individual can install a Measuring Device. You can either hire a Qualified Individual to install a Measuring Device or you can complete a training course on monitoring and reporting via the [University of California Cooperative Extension](#) to become a Qualified Individual yourself. Please refer to the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#) for more information about Qualified Individuals.

### **21. HOW AND WHERE DO I REPORT ACCURACY CERTIFICATIONS FOR MY MEASURING DEVICE?**

You can submit accuracy certifications for your Measuring Devices through [RMS](#). Additional information about Measuring Devices and accuracy requirements is described in Section 6 of the [Manual](#).

### **22. HOW DO I CALIBRATE NON-MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT LIKE A STAFF GAUGE?**

The goal of calibrating your Measuring Device is to ensure that your measurements meet the required accuracy limits. Calibration of a staff gauge will likely require each of the following:

- Confirmation that the rating curve or storage capacity curve for the water body is still accurate. (A rating curve shows the relationship between gauged elevation/water level and streamflow. A storage capacity curve shows the relationship between gauged elevation/water level and volume. Sediment buildup over time can impact the accuracy of these curves.)
- Verification that the datum is correct
- Verification that the gauge is vertical
- Checking that the gauge is legible

## ***OTHER MEASUREMENT QUESTIONS***

### **23. HOW DO I REPORT IF I SHARE A POINT OF DIVERSION WITH MULTIPLE OTHER WATER RIGHTS AND/OR OTHER DIVERTERS?**

If multiple water rights and/or claims share a Measuring Device at a point of diversion, you must submit a Measurement Method in the [Survey Portal](#) describing how to disaggregate the shared diversion data. Each datafile should specify both the total volume of water diverted at the shared point of diversion (i.e., the raw data from a shared device) as well as the volume of water diverted under the reported water right/claim (i.e., each water right/claim would have a unique datafile and together they would add up to the total diverted volume).

### **24. HOW DO I REPORT IF I DIVERT THROUGH MULTIPLE POINTS OF DIVERSION? DO I NEED A MEASURING DEVICE AT EACH INDIVIDUAL POINT OF DIVERSION?**

The simplest and most accurate way to measure a diversion with multiple points of diversion is often to install a Measuring Device at each separate point of diversion. However, any protocol that can determine the volume of water diverted at the required frequency and accuracy for each water right and/or claim is acceptable, provided that you submit the Report(s) of Water Measuring Device or Measurement Method form(s) via [RMS](#) or [Survey Portal](#), respectively.



### **QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS**

#### **25. HOW CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY BILL 589 TRAINING COURSE TO BECOME A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL?**

Assembly Bill 589 (AB 589) allows any diverter who has completed the appropriate training through the University of California Cooperative Extension to be considered a Qualified Individual. More information about this training course is available on the [University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources website](#). The website also includes the contact information of the course instructors if you would like to reach out to them directly.

#### **26. ARE TRAINED FIELD HYDROLOGISTS STILL REQUIRED TO TAKE THE AB 589 TRAINING COURSE TO BE CONSIDERED A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL?**

Depending on the size of your diversion, a trained field hydrologist may be required to take the Assembly Bill 589 course to become a Qualified Individual.

For diversions of less than 100 acre-feet per year, a sufficiently trained and experienced field hydrologist can be considered a Qualified Individual without additional training. For larger diversions, they may need to take the course, unless they are working under the supervision of a California-licensed Professional Engineer. Please refer to the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#) and Section 7 of the [Manual](#) for more information.

### **TELEMETRY REQUIREMENTS**

#### **27. WHAT ARE THE TELEMETRY REQUIREMENTS?**

Section 6.3 of the [Manual](#) describes the diverters that must telemeter their diversion data. If you must telemeter your diversions, you must post your daily diversion data to a publicly accessible website at least once per week. The data must also be available upon request and be provided in a format that is openable using Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access.

### **28. ARE TELEMETRY REQUIREMENTS BASED ON AUTHORIZED USE OR ACTUAL USE?**

For direct diversions, telemetry requirements are based on the maximum allowed diversion amount and/or rate for either a single water right/claim or a combination of rights/claims operating through the same point of diversion.

For diversions to storage, telemetry requirements are based on the storage facility's maximum capacity, not the volume of water currently in storage.

### **29. IS THERE A SPECIFIC WEBSITE WHERE I SHOULD POST MY TELEMETRY DATA?**

No, any website that is publicly accessible without login credentials is acceptable for posting telemetry data. This website may be owned and maintained directly by the diverter or by a third-party provider.

### **30. IF I TELEMETER MY DATA, DO I STILL NEED TO SUBMIT A DATAFILE WITH MY ANNUAL REPORT?**

Yes, you must submit your data with your Annual Report, even if you post your data to a public website each week. Datafiles submitted with Annual Reports should contain data collected at the required frequency. This frequency may be higher than is required by the telemetry requirements (which require daily data).

## ***FAILURE TO COMPLY***

### **31. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DO NOT MEASURE MY DIVERSION?**

Diverter who do not measure their diversions or meet the accuracy and frequency requirements are subject to fines and other enforcement actions. Please contact the Division as soon as possible and staff will work with you to reach compliance.

### **32. I RECEIVED MY FIRST NOTICE OF VIOLATION EVEN THOUGH I HAVE SUBMITTED MY DATAFILES IN THE SAME FORMAT FOR YEARS WITHOUT ANY ISSUES. WHY AM I NOW IN VIOLATION?**

Please contact the Division personnel referenced in your Notice of Violation and staff will work with you to reach compliance. If you believe you have received a Notice of Violation in error, please contact the Division as soon as possible.

### ***CONTACT INFORMATION***

#### **33. WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE REGULATION?**

You can email us at [DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:DWR-Measurement@Waterboards.ca.gov) or refer to the following phone numbers, depending on your water right/claim:

- *Permits / licenses:* (916) 323-9393
- *Statements of water diversion and use:* (916) 341-5300
- *Groundwater recordation:* (916) 319-0805

### ***ADDITIONAL RESOURCES***

More information on this Project can be found on the [Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation webpage](#).

*(This FAQ was last updated in March 2024)*