

## IDENTIFYING A PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

Pennsylvania's Safe Drinking Water Act (35 P.S. §721.1 *et seq.*) (Act) and regulations at Title 25 Pa. Code Chapter 109 require the permitting and regulation of public water systems (PWS). This fact sheet will assist you in determining if your water system meets the definition of a PWS.

### What is a PWS?

A PWS is a **system** that provides water to the public for human consumption, and which has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year. The term includes collection (i.e., drinking water sources), treatment, storage, and distribution facilities.

### How are the terms “system” and “human consumption” defined?

A system is a group of facilities used to provide water for human consumption including facilities used for collection, treatment, storage, and distribution. The facilities shall constitute a system if they are adjacent or geographically proximate to each other and meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

- The facilities provide water to the same establishment which is a business or commercial enterprise or an arrangement of residential or non-residential structures having a common purpose including mobile home parks, multi-unit housing complexes, phased subdivisions, campgrounds, and motels.
- The facilities are owned, managed or operated by the same person.
- The facilities have been regulated as a single public water system.

Water for human consumption includes water that is used for drinking, bathing and showering, cooking, dishwashing, or maintaining oral hygiene.

### Are there different types of PWSs?

Yes, there are different types of PWSs and their criteria are listed in the table below.

PWS Types	Criteria	Examples of PWSs
Community Water System (CWS)	Serves at least 15 service connections or 25 year-round residents.	Manufactured housing communities, municipal water systems, personal care homes, and housing developments.
Nontransient Noncommunity Water System (NTNCWS)	Not a CWS; but regularly serves at least 25 of the <b>same</b> persons over 6 months per year.	Schools, day care centers, hospitals, office buildings, and factories.
Transient Noncommunity Water System (TNCWS)	Not a CWS or NTNCWS; but regularly serves at least 25 persons.	Restaurants, golf courses, campgrounds, and churches.

**Note:** The term PWS also includes a system that provides water for bottling or bulk hauling for human consumption.

- The primary difference between community and noncommunity water systems relates to whether people **live or reside** at the system.
- The primary difference between NTNCWSs and TNCWSs relates to whether the **same** people drink the water on a regular basis or whether **different** people drink the water.

### Does serving 25 people include a combination of residents and employees?

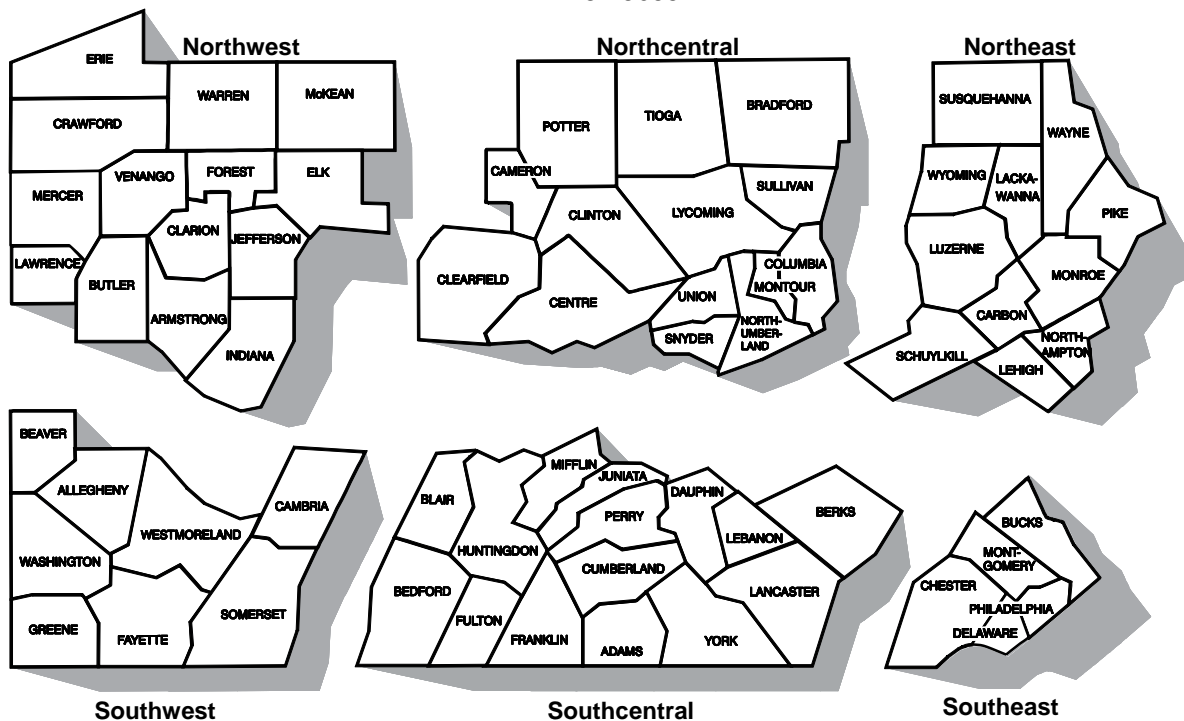
Yes. For example, if a residential care facility has a capacity for 15 beds and a staff of 12 people, the facility would be considered a nontransient noncommunity water system because the total population served is 27 people. If the residential population reaches 25 people in the future, the facility would then be considered a community water system.

## Who regulates PWSs?

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff are responsible for regulating PWSs. New or modified systems are required to comply with all permitting requirements and obtain DEP's approval for all water supply facilities prior to construction. Water supply facilities include sources, treatment, storage, and the distribution system. All facilities must meet DEP's design and construction standards. All sources must be adequately sited and constructed in order to obtain the highest quality source available, and to protect the source from existing or foreseeable sources of contamination. To find your local DEP office and phone number, use the map below.

**For more information, call the DEP regional office in your area or contact:**

**Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Safe Drinking Water  
717-787-9633**



### Northwest Region

230 Chestnut St.  
Meadville, PA 16335-3481  
Main Telephone: 814-332-6899  
24-Hour Emergency: 800-373-3398

**Counties:** Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren

### Northcentral Region

208 W. Third St., Suite 101  
Williamsport, PA 17701-6448  
Main Telephone: 570-327-3490  
24-Hour Emergency: 570-327-3636

**Counties:** Bradford, Cameron, Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union

### Northeast Region

2 Public Square  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1915  
Main Telephone: 570-826-2511  
24-Hour Emergency: 570-826-2511

**Counties:** Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming

### Southwest Region

400 Waterfront Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745  
Main Telephone: 412-442-4217  
24-Hour Emergency: 412-442-4000

**Counties:** Allegheny, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland

### Southcentral Region

909 Elmerton Ave.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-8200  
Main Telephone: 717-705-4708  
24-Hour Emergency: 800-541-2050

**Counties:** Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, and York

### Southeast Region

2 E. Main St.  
Norristown, PA 19401-4915  
Main Telephone: 484-250-5980  
24-Hour Emergency: 484-250-5900

**Counties:** Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia

For more information, visit [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov), search term: Drinking Water Management.