



## Frequently Asked Questions: Drinking Water Tank Inspection Reporting

### **Why does the Health Department require buildings to test water tanks and report the results?**

Many New York City buildings store drinking water in tanks. The Health Department wants to make sure that drinking water tanks are free of harmful bacteria that could make residents sick.

### **Which types of water tanks are covered by the Health Department's inspection and reporting requirement?**

The requirement applies to any tank used to store or pressurize a building's drinking water.

### **If the building has a dual-purpose water storage tank that supplies a fire suppression system *and* a drinking water supply system does the tank need to be inspected?**

Yes, because some of the water is used as drinking water.

### **If the building has a stand-alone fire suppression tank, does the tank need to be inspected?**

No. Water storage tanks that are completely separate from the drinking water supply system are not subject to this requirement.

### **Are domestic hot water heating tanks subject to this requirement?**

No.

### **Who reports water tank inspection results to the Health Department?**

The building owner is responsible for ensuring that the required yearly inspection is conducted and that its results are reported to the Health Department on time. The owner may appoint a representative, such as a water tank inspecting and cleaning firm, a superintendent or a building manager to conduct the inspection and file the report.

### **If a person owns more than one building, how are the inspection results reported?**

Building owners must submit a separate reporting form for each building with a unique Department of Buildings-issued Building Identification Number (BIN) that uses a tank to store drinking water. For example, if a building owner owns three separate buildings, each with a drinking water tank, he or she would need to file three separate reports.

### **What annual deadlines apply?**

The tank must be inspected at least once each calendar year, January 1 to December 31. The inspection can be done at any time during the calendar year. Regardless of when the inspection is done, the owner (or his/her representative) has until close of business on January 15 of the following year to submit the report on paper or electronically. For example, regardless of whether an inspection happens on January 1, 2015, December 31, 2015 or any date in between, the report must be submitted by January 15, 2016.

**My building does not have a drinking water tank but received a reminder from the Department about performing an annual inspection. What should I do?**

If your building does not have a tank used to hold drinking water but received a reminder from the Department, the owner or a representative should notify the Department. There are two ways to do this. The first is to use the online Water Tank Inspection Reporting application [here](https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration) (<https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration>). The second is to send a letter to the Department. The letter should include the building address, the BIN, contact information for the building owner (including address, email and phone number) and a statement that the building’s water supply system does not include a tank. It should be mailed to:

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Public Health Engineering  
Water Tank Inspection Reporting  
42-09 28th Street, 14th Floor  
Long Island City, NY 11101-4132

**How does the reporting process work?**

Review the sample inspection reporting form [here](https://nyc.gov/health/watertanks) ([nyc.gov/health/watertanks](https://nyc.gov/health/watertanks)) and prepare all of the necessary information. Then visit the online Water Tank Inspection Reporting site to fill out the reporting form. In order to complete the form, the building owner or a representative will need to register with a valid email address. After registration, partially completed reports can be saved and finished at a later time. The online Water Tank Inspection Reporting can be accessed [here](https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration) (<https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/OnlineRegistration>).

**What should the inspection report include?**

The inspection report must include everything on the Health Department’s inspection reporting form. Find a printable version of the inspection report [here](https://nyc.gov/health/watertanks) ([nyc.gov/health/watertanks](https://nyc.gov/health/watertanks)). Partially completed inspection reports will not be accepted.

**How is the report submitted to the Health Department?**

The most convenient way to submit is to enter inspection data into the Health Department’s online reporting form. As an alternative, mail a paper form (see below). Owners of buildings with more than one water tank should be sure to use the “multiple tanks” version of the paper form.

**What are the additional requirements for submitting a paper form?**

Paper forms must be completed using a digitally or mechanically typed font; handwritten forms are not accepted. Any paper form deemed incomplete or otherwise unacceptable will be returned to the sender and will not be considered as documentation of the required annual inspection. Paper inspection reports for buildings with more than one water tank must use the “multiple tanks” form. Mail paper inspection reporting forms to:

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Public Health Engineering  
Water Tank Inspection Reporting  
42-09 28th Street, 14th Floor  
Long Island City, NY 11101-4132

**What are the additional requirements for submitting the paper “multiple tanks” form?**

When submitting a paper form for a building with more than one water tank on the premises, the specialized “multiple tanks” form must be used. The multiple tanks form is separated into two sections, the first section (“cover sheet”) must be completed once for the building address, and the second form (“results sheet”) can be printed out multiple times to provide the required reporting form for each tank located at the building.

**What must the inspection include?**

Part (b) of NYC Health Code [§141.07](#) provides a full description of the required inspection activities. These include general inspection requirements (assessing the condition of the internal and external tank structures, pipes, access ladders, roof, access hatches and screens), sanitary inspection requirements (assessing the presence of sediment, biological growth, floatable debris or insects, and rodent/bird activity in or around the tank) as well as “bacteriological” sampling (collecting a sample and analyzing for the presence of harmful bacteria).

**What does “bacteriological” mean?**

Bacteriological means relating to bacteria. The Health Department is concerned about “Coliform” bacteria. If Coliform bacteria are found in a building’s drinking water, the storage tank from which the sample was collected may be contaminated and require cleaning and disinfection.

**What are the requirements for bacteriological sampling?**

Bacteriological water quality samples must be conducted in accordance with the Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater and must be analyzed and reported by a laboratory that is certified by the State of New York through the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) to perform potable (drinking) water analyses. A listing of currently certified ELAP laboratories can be found here:

<http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elap/comm.html>

**Should the building owner keep a copy of the inspection report?**

Yes. The owner must keep a copy of the report for at least five years from the date of inspection. A copy of the completed report can be printed from the online Water Tank Inspection Reporting “review report” screen. If the Health Department or a building resident asks for the results of an inspection report, the building owner must supply it within five business days.

**What are the City regulations that govern water tanks?**

The relevant City regulations for drinking water storage tank inspections are the New York City Health Code, Article 141, Section [§141.07](#) and [Chapter 31](#) of Title 24 of the Rules of the City of New York (Commissioners Regulations).

The regulations that govern the design, cleaning and disinfection of water storage tanks are the New York City Health Code Article 141, Section [§141.09](#) and the New York City Construction Code, Plumbing Code, [Chapter 6 Section 606.5](#).

Parts (d)-(f) of code [§141.07](#) describe the requirements for public notice of inspection results, corrective action upon identification of unsanitary conditions and enforcement policies regarding failure to submit inspection reports.