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Contact Water Bureau Public
Information at 503-823-8064.

Water Bureau Seeking Public Comment on Code Updates

Updating laws that guide us for the benefit of our customers and the community

Title 21 is a set of codes that guide our work at the Portland Water Bureau. These codes inform the rules and laws that direct our operations and define the roles and responsibilities of staff who deliver water to nearly a million people in the Portland area.

During this recent review process, we have revised outdated provisions and added Charter changes resulting from ballot measures approved by voters in November 2019.

“We know that our community cares about how we operate your water system,” said Water Bureau Chief Engineer Teresa Elliott. “We’ve spent the past two years reviewing laws that oversee our operations to be sure they are current, consistent and in line with our shared values.”

This revision process has improved Title 21 by:

- Redefining the authority of the Chief Engineer to plan and maintain our water system.
- Clarifying the cost sharing process for main extensions and service installations, including clarity for construction and maintenance responsibilities related to water infrastructure serving private property.
- Clarifying the terms for compliance and inspection of backflow prevention assembly—a system that prevents water from flowing from private property back into the public water system.
- Deferring to the annual rates ordinance as the forum for setting rates and charges, while also providing potential support for renters by assigning billing responsibility to property owners.
- Providing additional environmental protections by adding details that voters approved by Charter Amendment in November 2019. For work performed in the Bull Run Watershed, Title 21 now includes rules about riparian protection, stream crossings, wet weather construction, and fire prevention.
- Adding language from the November 2019 Charter Amendment allowing the Water Bureau to help other communities—and vice versa—during an emergency or natural disaster.

For more information and to read the revised Title 21 document, click [here](#). Translations are available in [Spanish](#), [Russian](#), [Vietnamese](#) and [simplified Chinese](#). The full Title 21 package is available for translation upon request. To submit public comment or feedback specifically related to these revisions, please email marisa.cesare@portlandoregon.gov by 5 p.m. Aug. 14.

ABOUT THE PORTLAND WATER BUREAU

The Portland Water Bureau serves water to almost a million people in the Portland area. Portland's water system includes two great water sources, 53 tanks and reservoirs, and 2,200 miles of pipes. With 600 employees working on everything from water treatment to customer service, the Water Bureau is committed to serving excellent water every minute of every day.

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