Summary of Three Waters Request for Information Clinic

# Tuesday, 8 December 2020, 8am to 11am

## Overview of the clinic

The purpose of this clinic is to provide an overview of Tables B and C and for councils to ask any specific or general questions they may have.

## Link to the recording

<https://vimeo.com/489573718/c03565c429>

## Questions related to Section B

**Question: I believe I incorrectly interpreted that line B2.27 (total number of unplanned mains interruptions) was a different number than the one above (B2.20), but it sounds like you want those two to be the same number.**

Answer: Yes, we do please.

**Question: In relation to Table B2, does restoration relate to the restoration of the service or the restoration of the main/holes?**

Answer: Restoration is the time it takes to fully restore the service to the customer(s). Do not include the total time to reinstate the ground and surface-works.

**Question: In relation to line B3b.2 (Number of incidents of habitable floor flooding in the year), are you talking about habitable floors or any part of the property?**

Answer: Only habitable floors should be included in this line. If there are other parts of the floors flooded in the year (such as a garage), then please highlight these in the commentary cells. We received feedback that this is a common measure in New Zealand, and most instances of flooding are probably on habitable floors (i.e. dwellings or residences), which is why we chose this terminology.

**Follow on question: Isn’t the habitable floor standard what the Building Act requires of councils for stormwater control?**

There is a requirement in the Building Code, E1, and Acceptable Solution for urban dwellings relating to floor levels and flooding in relation to the height of the crown of the adjacent road. Councils however will have determined their own Level of Service relating to stormwater and protection against flooding of dwellings/habitable floors. The requirement in B3.2 and B3.3 is still to report the incidences of actual flooding of habitable floors.

**Follow on Question: In Table B3b, are we talking actual flooding incidents or model flooding incidents?**

Answer: In lines B3b.1 – B3b.10 we need data for actual flooding incidents. This contrasts with Lines B3b.22 and B3b.23 which ask for are any properties at risk. Please use any modelling information available to populate those lines.

**Question: Where large areas of flooding occur due to severe weather events how should this be reflected with respect to wastewater overflows on properties?**

Answer: Please use line B3a.6 for external flooding attributed to severe weather events and line B3.3 for internal flooding attributed to severe weather events.

If there is a significant weather event which results in large areas of flooding and overflow of wastewater or sewerage, then please report that as both a wastewater overflow and stormwater flooding according to the applicable category in Table B3a e.g. B3a.2 if the overloaded wastewater system flooded private property.

**Question: Please confirm that B4 is specifically around billing and metering?**

Answer: Yes, that is correct. Billing and metering enquiries should be recorded in lines B4.1-B4.5.

**Question: Where should we put new billing enquiries?**

Answer: In the first block in lines B4.1 – B4.5.

**Question: For Table B5, where would you record walk-ups? I.e. the people that walk up to the counter to ask questions.**

Answer: Please put this data in Block 1 (lines B5.1-B5.7) because when they walk up, this complaint still gets written down, so we would classify it as a written complaint. Please include a note in the comment field explaining that you have done this.

**Question: In relation to line B3c.3 (Stormwater - Road corridor flooding incidents (overloaded stormwater systems)), our council utilises roads as over the top flooding. How do we capture this as a number of local roads maybe affected and is it based on a flood height (i.e. 50mm etc.) or an un-useable road?**

Answer: This question is about external flooding, so the habitable floors definition would not apply here. Any event that results in an overwhelming of the stormwater system onto the road should still be captured in B3c.3. This is the case regardless of whether the road is used as a flood overflow deliberately or not. Please include a note in the comment field explaining that you have done this.

**Question: Where would you put request that comes through a council mobile app?**

Answer: Please include this data in Block 1 (lines B5.1 – B5.7). Please include a note in the comment field explaining that you have done this.

## Questions relating to Table C

**Question: In relation to lines C1.2 and C1.2b, what if it fails across a number of different determinands?**

Answer: A water sample is typically tested for a large number of parameters. If any such sample fails across multiple criteria, it still only counts as a single failure - the sample has failed. As such please enter the number of failing samples, not the number of breaches of standards that may occur as a result of a sample failing against a number of different criteria. We do this because our analysis considers the percentage of samples failing.

**Follow on question: Is this sample period of determinands failing across the year?**

Answer: Yes, please include the sample across the reporting year. In Scotland, the reporting year is different to the financial year (a consequence of EU legislation) - if the reporting year is different to the financial year, please use the commentary to make this clear.

**Question: Are transgressions that may later be deemed allowable by the Drinking Water Assessment (DWA) considered a failure?**

Answer: The requirement is to provide data from the last reporting year. We assume that by now the DWA would have deemed whether there were any technical failures. Therefore, if it was not determined to be a failure, please do not include it.

**Question: Is sampling for C1.1 - C1.4 only for samples in the reticulation, not at the treatment plant?**

Answer: Yes. Please include the water treatment plant sample data in lines C1.16 – C1.19.

**Question: Do you want the "after plant" samples included in the C1.1 - C1.4? After plant is a sample taken after the treatment plant but before the first take off or customer.**

Please include any failing samples that have resulted from water quality tests. A failing sample that is close to the works is more likely to affect more customers.

**Question: In relation to Table C2, we are fine on THMs at one small plant, but we breach HAAs occasionally, can we include that with THMs?**

Answer: Yes, that would be sensible approach since HAAs are a by-product of chlorination. Please explain that you have done this in the comment fields. Please also note any applicable standards to which you are held accountable.

**Question: In relation to Table C4 (Single Tier Consents), where a consent allows for a volume metric limit and a limit on say nutrients for example. Is that a single tier or many requirements?**

Answer: That example would be ‘many requirements’. It should only be recorded as a single tier if there is only one limit set for each parameter included in the consent. If it goes above that limit it is an automatic fail. A single tier consent could still cover multiple parameters, its just whether there is one limit for those parameters. As such consents with maximum and median/mean indicators are not single tier. Similarly, those with different levels for different seasons are not single tier.

**Question: Is a median limit and a 90th percentile limit an example of a two-tier consent?**

Answer: Yes.

**Question: You are probably familiar with our regime in New Zealand by now, whereby for most of these discharge limits, even the sampling is sometimes undertaken by the regional council, and they will be the determinant as to whether it fails or not. So those notices tend to come as an abatement or non-compliance notice from the regional council. Where you talk about total and sample discharges and the number of discharges that are compliant, these are determined by the regional council (or unitary authority where these exist). If the water authority does their own voluntary testing as well, where should that be noted?**

Answer: The Regional Council’s annual report on a Council's "discharges" in their region is the best way to respond on the compliant/non-compliant question. However, please include the sampling that is undertaken around compliance, even if it is completed by the council themselves.

**Question: Is a consent requiring that daily loading of the primary pond not exceed 84 kg of 5-day BOD per hectare count as a numeric BOD consent?**

Answer: Yes.

**Question: In Table C4, line C4.20, does the total population equivalent relate to the population served by that plant, or the population of the entire district (that is served by multiple plants)?**

Answer: C4.20 relates to the population equivalent served by all plants that are confirmed as failing. This is then expressed as a percentage of the total population equivalent reported for the whole council in line A4.32.

A4.32 includes the trade waste loads. The calculation for this line is defined in the schedules.

We think that the 60gm/capita day limit on BOD is quite low for NZ. Councils should calculate the population equivalent using this figure for consistency, but can we ask that the councils put in the actual BOD gms/capita day that they actually use for their wastewater plants in the comment fields.

**Question: C6.1 – is that related to the existing LTP or the future LTP?**

Answer: It is related to your current LTP, not the future LTP.

**Question: Regarding the population equivalent, I am a bit confused. I would appreciate it if you could provide the list of items which we need to use the total population in the council like A1.43, A1.44, C6.3, C6.3, or population serviced by the water and wastewater schemes?**

The population information provided in the A Tables relates to the numbers of people directly or indirectly benefitting from the service provided. In the C Tables, we are interested in the population equivalent served. This reflects the burden on treatment of wastewater that results from the wastewater received at the treatment sites. Where that site faces a very high BOD requirement, the effective population served is much higher than the actual population from whom wastewater is collected. A good example could be discharges received at a local wastewater treatment plant from a rural dairy or meat processing plant. Please see the note above on the appropriate calculation of the population equivalent. There is clear guidance in the supporting schedule.

## General questions

**Question: In relation to Table J3 (the contractors’ rates for standard works). What is the definition of a standard contractor rate?**

Answer: Please provide the most recent rates you have been quoted for different sizes of assets and service types (grassland, rural/suburban, urban highway). Please base the estimate on recent quotes or recent works completed.

**Follow on question: Would it suffice if we provided the most recent data which is two years old now? Or, do you want us to best estimate the future rate?**

Answer: We are hoping for more recent data here. Please provide an estimate for a current rate if you are able to do that.

**Question: In Table J where it asks for mains asset information etc. Do you want things such as valves and manholes included in the information? Or is it solely the mains information you are after?**

Answer: Yes, please include valves and manholes in the information as well as any on-costs (e.g. traffic management costs). Essentially, it would be the ‘all in rate’.

**Question: The guidance document for the J section advises the J3 table doesn't need to be completed if contractor rates are provided in J1 (with a further note Watercare used contractor unit rates to inform replacement costs in J1); so J3 can be left blank if contractor rates are taken into consideration in J1?**

We ask that councils provide their contractor rates for each category of asset in Table J1. We are happy to receive these based on off-the-shelf information (e.g. a spreadsheet). Otherwise, we ask councils to complete table J3 in line with the detailed instructions provided.

*[Figure: Screenshot from the supporting schedule]*



**Follow on question: The definitions for J say to exclude Traffic Management - can you please confirm?**

Post meeting note: Page 16 of the schedule for Section J asks for the cost of mains laying to be excluded in relation to grassland. Please include traffic management costs in relation to mains laying on rural/suburban highways and urban highways.

**Question: In relation to line A2.32 (difference in water balance), could you clarify what that figure should be?**

Answer: In order to clarify A2.32, you will need to understand how this relates to A2.25 – A2.31.

A2.25 to A2.30 should approximately add up to A2.31. If there is a difference between the figures though, please note that in A2.32.

An example is provided below:

* Distribution input = 1000m3/d
* Total potable water delivered to household & non-household properties = 700m3/d
* Total leakage = 200m3/d
* Distribution system operational use = 30m3/d
* Water taken legally unbilled = 20m3/d
* Water taken illegally unbilled = 20m3/d

Difference in water balance = 1000-(700+200+30+20+20) = 30m3/d

**Question: In relation to E11.15 (vehicles & plant) - what should be included for plants?**

Answer: All vehicles and plant that are owned by the council for three waters assets e.g. diggers and other equipment/machinery.

**Question: E4.24: Does membrane filtration generally count as W4: Complex treatment? Are there any specific pore size requirements (i.e <1 um, <0.2 um)?**

Answer: Membrane filtration should be included in this category of treatment. Please use the comments field to explain what you have included, including the specific pore size.

**Question: In Table B1 (Line B1.7), would you class a "conserve water notice" as a restriction? Or are you wanting just an enforced restriction i.e. no handheld hoses to be used etc.?**

Answer: Yes, it would be classed as a restriction. A restriction is anything that asks a customer to change behaviours.

**Question: I have a question regarding wastewater pumping stations. For Line E9.28 (terminal pumping stations), is that the same as the pumping stations from E7.15?**

Answer: No, they are not the same. E7.15 is referring to wastewater system as a whole (i.e. all pumping stations throughout the network) whereas E9.28 is referring to the pumping stations at the plant.

**Question: For lines E4.20-24, we have a plant that has aeration, UV, chlorination and pH adjustment. I had that classified as Simple Disinfection, but now I'm thinking it should be included in line E4.23 (W3: More than one stage of treatment excluding W4) instead, can you confirm?**

Answer: Yes, that should be included in line E4.23 (W3) as it is more than one stage of treatment.

**Question: Will this session be recorded?**

Answer: Yes, the recording is provided at the top of this sheet.