

Instructions for Aquifer Testing Plan (Plan) and Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation(AHE)



Overview:

The online Plan and AHE forms have been developed to assist project sponsors in submitting a Plan or AHE in accordance with the Commission's Aquifer Testing Guidance (Commission Policy 2021-02) and Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation Policy (Commission Policy No. 2021-03). Please note the following:

1. All Plans or AHEs submitted to the Commission after April 18, 2016, must be submitted through the online process. Hard copies will no longer be accepted.
2. The AHE policy became effective on October 1, 2021, and replaces the Aquifer Testing Plan Waiver Request (Waiver). Waivers started or submitted prior to October 1, 2021, will continue to be reviewed without requiring that new forms be started or submitted.
3. Projects with previously approved aquifer testing plans have already met the aquifer testing plan requirement of 18 CFR 806.12 and may not need to complete a Plan or AHE. Please contact Commission staff for guidance.
4. The normal process requires the submittal of an online Plan or AHE, which will be reviewed and approved, if appropriate, by Commission staff. After the Plan or AHE is approved, an online groundwater withdrawal application will be generated using the information provided in the online Plan or AHE submittal. Certain projects may not require that a Plan or AHE be submitted. See #5 of this section below.
5. By linking the online Plan or AHE with an online application, the Commission intends to reduce, to the extent possible, duplication of effort.
6. Under certain circumstances, submittal of an online groundwater withdrawal application may be required prior to approval of the online Plan or AHE. Should the normal process not be applicable for your project, please contact Commission staff for guidance.
7. In accordance with Commission regulations effective July 1, 2017, and October 1, 2021, not all projects are required to complete a constant-rate aquifer test. Mining related withdrawals solely for the purpose of dewatering; construction dewatering withdrawals, withdrawals for the sole purpose of groundwater or below water table remediation, and small capacity sources that provide no more than 20,000 gallons per day may not require aquifer tests to support a groundwater withdrawal application. Please contact Commission staff for additional guidance.

General Instructions:

1. **Internet browser requirements: The Commission's online application process requires the use of Firefox due to functionality issues that arise in other browsers.** To download Firefox, please go to: <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>

2. Pop-up blockers should be disabled to prevent functionality issues.
3. Please use the HELP link along the left margin of the Plan or AHE to contact Commission staff about Information Technology related problems or to ask general questions about the content of the application. Please allow sufficient time, generally 1 business day, for staff to respond during normal business hours.
4. Information boxes appear throughout the online tool and are indicated by the  box. Click on the  for more information regarding the data request.
5. Data entered into the online tool is not automatically saved. The user must click on the “Save Aquifer Testing Plan” or “Save Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation” located at the bottom of the page, to save the most recently entered information. If the web browser is closed prior to saving the Plan or AHE, the information entered will be lost.
6. In Section 1.5 and Section 2.3, the user has the ability to provide multiple entries and build a table of entries. After each entry, the “Submit Measurement” button (Section 1.5) or “Submit” button (Section 2.3) at the end of the section must be clicked to save the entry and create the table (for the first entry) or add it to the table. **If the “submit” button at the end of the section is not clicked after each entry, the information will be lost.** Please do not click the “Submit Aquifer Testing Plan” or “Submit Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation” button at the bottom of each the page until the Plan or AHE is final.
7. The online tool times out after 20 minutes of non-use. After 18 minutes, a warning screen appears telling the user that the online tool must be used in the next two minutes. Plans or AHEs that time out will lose information that was not saved.
8. Files larger than approximately 50 MB should be split into smaller files to avoid data transfer and file upload issues.
9. Please use only alpha-numeric characters in file names. An error message will occur if the file names contain special characters (e.g.; ~, @, +, %, &, #).
10. The online tool includes a "Check for Errors" option (located at the bottom of each page) that may be used at any time to evaluate the completeness of the Plan or AHE. Please note that this option will check for errors throughout all pages of the online tool, regardless if all of the pages have been completed. The "Check for Errors" option does not save the Plan or AHE.
11. To navigate between data cells in the online tool, please point and click, or use the tab button. Use of the “enter” button has been disabled and will result in no action.
12. Enter -9999 or NA (depending on format of data) for any required field for which data is not available or applicable.

Initiating and Submitting a Plan or AHE:

1. The project sponsor must initiate the online Plan or AHE. If the project sponsor is not already a registered user of the online application system, navigate to the online application page (<https://services.srbc.net/applications/>), click on the "Register" link in the lower left corner of the log in box, complete the required fields, and click on the "Create User" button. Once the registration information is processed, Commission staff will contact the project sponsor to confirm that a username and password have been activated. The online tool and the Monitoring Data Website (MDW) are separate systems and require separate passwords.
2. In Section 1.1, complete, verify or update the project sponsor for the facility with new or existing contact information in the Project Contact Information (PCI) Form. Select the PCI form link to populate new contacts, or update previous contacts for existing projects/facilities. The project sponsor must complete the form before submittal of the Plan or AHE.
3. In Section 1.2, project sponsors that are eligible for municipal or member jurisdiction agency fee discounts or any fee exempt status must contact Commission staff prior to submittal of the Plan or AHE to obtain the discount code.
4. After a Plan or AHE is initiated, the project sponsor may share access with a consultant or other party by clicking the "Share" link to the right of the Plan or AHE name on the project sponsor's applications page and following the on-screen instructions. Users who are granted access by the project sponsor should enter the online tool using their own credentials. The project sponsor's user name and password should not be shared with other users.
5. Shared users do not have the ability to submit the application. Therefore, only the project sponsor, using its username and password, has the ability to submit the application.
6. Project sponsors that are eligible for municipal or member jurisdiction agency fee discounts must contact Commission staff prior to submittal to obtain a discount code.
7. When the "Submit Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation" or "Submit Aquifer Test Plan" button is clicked, an invoice review page will appear. The project sponsor must review the draft invoice and agree that it is accurate. When the draft invoice is determined to be accurate and the Plan or AHE is ready to be submitted, the project sponsor must sign it (provide name, company, and title) and then click the "Submit Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation" or "Submit Aquifer Test Plan" button. A "Please Wait" message will appear as the AHE or Plan is processed. Please do not click the "Submit" button more than once as the submittal process could take several minutes.
8. Once the Plan or AHE has been submitted, a final invoice will automatically be generated based on the information provided. Invoices are viewable and downloadable from the

project sponsor's application page when logged into the online tool. Payment of all fees is due within 30 days of the date the Plan or AHE was submitted.

9. Following submittal of a Plan or AHE, the project sponsor will receive an email containing the Commission assigned preliminary number for the Plan or AHE and a link to the invoice.
10. If revisions are made to the Plan or AHE during administrative and technical reviews, the project sponsor must click on the "Submit Aquifer Test Plan" or "Submit Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation" button to finalize the Plan or AHE and notify Commission staff that changes have been made and it is ready to be reviewed.
11. Project sponsors are encouraged to keep a hard copy of their completed Plan or AHE. The body of the Plan or AHE can be printed by clicking on the "View" link next to the Plan or AHE name, pressing "Ctrl" and "P", and following the on-screen directions. PDF attachments can be printed by clicking on the "View all PDF uploads here" link, and pressing "Ctrl" and "P". Other file type uploads must be opened individually and printed, if desired.

Approved Plan or AHE:

1. Upon approval of a Plan or AHE by Commission staff, a groundwater withdrawal application will become available to the project sponsor, with some information already pre-populated by the online tool.
2. The groundwater withdrawal application that is created upon approval of a Plan or AHE is not automatically shared with the consultant that completed the Plan or AHE.

Functional Sample Template:

1. Prior to initiating a project, the Commission recommends that potential applicants review the functional sample template for a Plan or AHE to develop an understanding of what information is required. The sample template can be accessed from the Application Process page of the Commission's website (<https://www.srbc.net/regulatory/application-process/>).
2. The template link will take the user to a page with a pre-populated username and password, and the user must then select the "Log In" button to enter the sample template.
3. More than one party can be concurrently logged into the sample template.
4. Information entered into the sample template will be viewable by other parties working in the sample template. **Confidential or proprietary information should not be entered into the template.**
5. All information entered will be automatically deleted at the end of each night.
6. The sample template cannot be converted to an active submittal.

7. The “submit” feature for the sample template has been disabled. Therefore, the final steps of reviewing invoices and final submittal cannot be previewed.

Inactive Application Deletion Notice:

Un-submitted applications, plans, waivers, AHEs, or Notices of Intent that have not been updated or modified within the last 12 months may be deleted by Commission staff.