



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
ONE WINTER STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108 617-292-5500

ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI
Governor

JANE SWIFT
Lieutenant Governor

BOB DURAND
Secretary

LAUREN A. LISS
Commissioner

**Determining a Threat To Public Water Supplies Related to Presence of Beaver and Muskrat
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
Drinking Water Program**

Applies to Public Water Suppliers (PWSs) with beaver or muskrat populations endangering public water supply sources or pump stations:

Rationale: The presence of beavers or muskrats near public water supply sources may pose a threat to the protection of public health. Both animals have commonly been identified as carriers of *Giardia Lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium*--pathogens identified within the Surface Water Treatment Rule and Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule respectively as posing an unacceptable risk to drinking water. Amendments to the State's trapping laws charge DEP with determining when a threat to human health and safety exists as a result of the presence of beavers and muskrats in and around public water supply sources and pump stations. A DEP determination that a threat exists may be used by an applicant to petition the local Board of Health for an emergency permit to eliminate the threat.

Applications

Applications to DEP requesting that a determination as to the existence of a threat to human health and safety resulting from beavers and muskrats in and around public water supply sources and pump stations must include the following information:

1. A scaled site map showing the location of all affected areas where determinations are requested in relation to all potentially impacted public water supply sources or pump stations. All public water supply sources and pump stations must be labeled on the site plan.
2. A narrative which:
 - a. Details the reason for the determination request;
 - b. Identifies the duration of the problem;
 - c. Identifies control mechanisms already used;
 - d. Identifies changes in water levels or flowpath. This information will be specific to problems related to flooding; and
 - e. Includes available evidence of interaction between groundwater sources and surface waters.
3. A description of the proposed method for eliminating the threat which:

This information is available in alternate format by calling our ADA Coordinator at (617) 574-6872.

- a. Specifies the type of trap, if any, that will be used;
- b. Specifies if dams will be breached; and
- c. Specifies if the use of non-lethal management or water-flow devices is proposed.

Review and Determination

DEP may determine that a threat to human health and safety exists if beavers or muskrats or dams or active lodges are observed:

- Within a pathogen control zone previously sanctioned by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.
- Within a terminal reservoir or in a tributary within 400 feet of a terminal reservoir.
- Within 400 feet of a public water supply well or wellfield.
- Within 200 feet of a public water supply pump station.
- In a tributary, beyond 400 feet of a terminal reservoir, if the applicant can demonstrate that degradation in water quality is occurring. Parameters used to demonstrate a degradation in water quality shall include:
 - Fecal coliform
 - Total coliform
 - Turbidity
 - Total Organic Carbon
 - *Giardia*
 - *Cryptosporidium*

Actions

Following the submittal of a complete application, the DEP will conduct a site visit to determine if a threat exists to a water supply. The DEP/Wetlands Program, local Board of Health, and local conservation commission will be invited to any field visit for a determination. After the field visit, DEP will send the applicant a determination letter with a copy to the local Board of Health, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and Massachusetts Department of Public Health. DEP will try to issue its determination within 5 business days from receipt of a complete application. If that determination identifies that a threat exists, the applicant may petition the local Board of Health for an emergency permit to abate the threat. The determination from DEP will require that the applicant notify DEP within a specified time period as to the actions completed and whether the threat was successfully eliminated. Proposals for the removal or breaching of dams, or other actions which will lower water levels must receive the approval of the local conservation commission within the City/Town that the proposed action will take place.

The emergency permit for trapping is for ten days during which trapping can be carried out and dams may be removed as allowed. There is authority by Fisheries and Wildlife for their Director to permit an extension for an additional 30 days.