



Water Act

Fact Sheet

Approvals and Licences

Alberta's Water Act requires that an approval and/or licence be obtained before undertaking a construction activity in a water body or before diverting and using water (surface water and groundwater).

An approval provides authority for constructing works or for undertaking an "activity" within a water body. The approval will include conditions under which the construction or "activity" must take place.

A licence provides authority for diverting and using surface water or groundwater. The licence identifies the source of water supply, the location of the diversion site, an allocation of water to be diverted and used from that source, the priority of the "water right" established by the licence, and the conditions under which the diversion and use must take place.

When do I need to apply for approvals or licences?

The following lists the activities in water bodies and diversions of water that do not require approvals or licences:

Approvals are NOT required for

- placing, constructing, installing, maintaining, replacing or removing
 - floating platforms, portable or seasonal piers, boat launches or docks
 - fences in water bodies
 - portable pumps if there are no significant alterations or disturbances of beds and shores of water bodies
 - beaver dams on land owned by the individuals requiring removal
 - water wells if the water is to be used for household purposes
 - dugouts where the dugouts are not located in watercourses, lakes or wetlands
- commencing, continue or conducting exploration for groundwater for the purpose of obtaining information in support of an application for a licence to divert water.

- any surface water control system defined and approved in the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.

Licences to Divert Water are NOT required for

- statutory household use
- traditional agriculture use
- fire-fighting
- wells equipped with hand pumps
- operating an alternate watering system, using surface water, for livestock that are generally grazed

For further information on other approval and licence exemptions, please contact the nearest Regional office (see the last page for contacts).

How do I apply for an approval or a licence?

Application forms are available at the regional offices and can be filed at these offices. The completed application form should have the following supporting information:

Plans

Accurate drawings of the project showing:

- suitable scale and legal land location tied to section or quarter-section lines
- features such as water bodies with flow directions, roads, buildings such as pump houses, etc.
- if applicable, water and wastewater conveyance structures, such as ditches, canals, water supply lines, wastewater discharge channels, etc.
- location of intake structures, control structures, spillway, dam and reservoir locations, including cross sections of structures, dams, and reservoirs
- layout of the water system and indicate the location and extent of the lands to be serviced
- if applicable, number of acres to be irrigated, irrigable areas to be shown cross-hatched
- if applicable, reservoir capacity elevation rating curve

Depending on the type and complexity of the structures, it may be necessary to submit additional detailed plans.

Conceptual plans may be accepted for initial processing on the understanding that construction plans will be forwarded for review. One (1) set of plans will be required for the initial processing.

Reports

Depending on the complexity of the project, the following information may be required:

- project description including:
 - construction specification
 - proposed construction schedule
 - operational plans
 - water requirements
 - method of operation
 - anticipated operating capacity of pumps (pump specifications for intake and water well pumps)
- hydrologic analysis (water availability) indicating potential adverse effects on
 - the source of water supply
 - neighbouring lands, works, and water supply
 - the aquatic environment
- for irrigation projects involving agricultural crop production (grains, wheat, barley, etc.), an “Agricultural Feasibility Report” indicating
 - soil and water suitability for irrigation
 - water requirements for irrigation
 - losses
 - method of operation
 (See Guideline for Agricultural Feasibility Reports)
- geotechnical information for dykes and dams falling within the Dam Safety Branch Guidelines

Other Requirements

You may be required to submit written permission for right-of-access from appropriate authorities where works affect highways, roads, utilities, or lands.

Authorizations under other legislation may be required. You will be informed of these during the review of your application.

What happens to my application after Alberta Environment receives it?

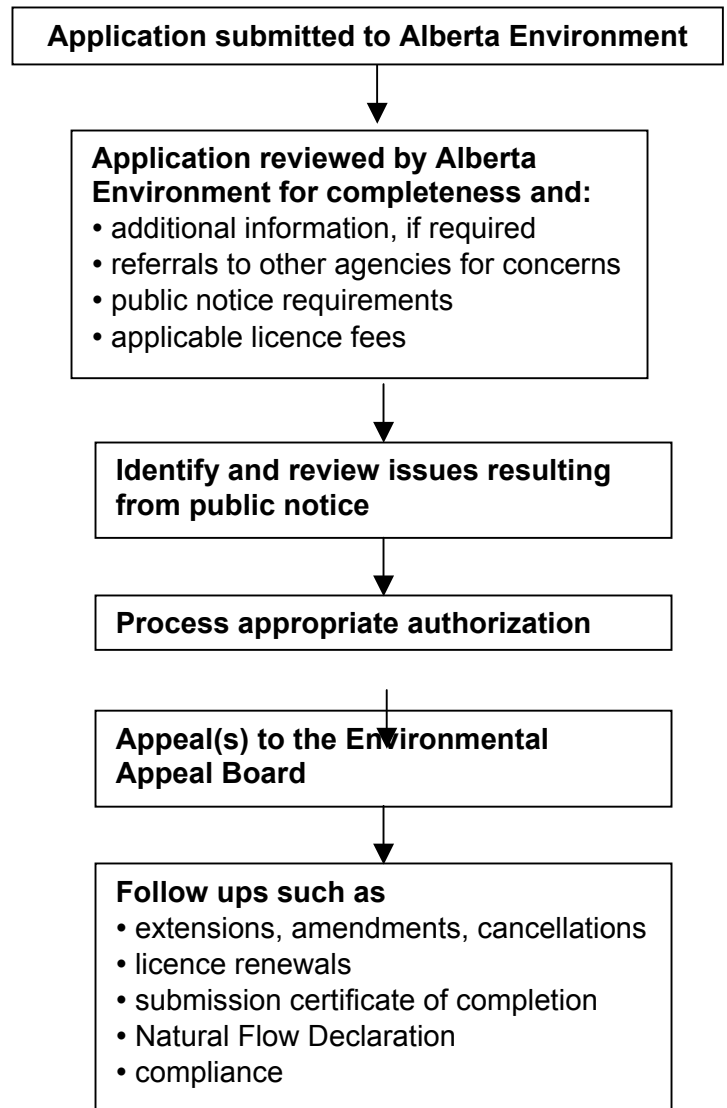
Regional staff will review your application for

- hydraulic, hydrological and hydrogeological effects
- effects on the aquatic environment
- effects on public safety
- effects on licensees, household and other water users
- suitability of the land for irrigation, if irrigation is involved

Also, the application may

- be referred to other agencies that have interests in the project
- require notification in the form of a public notice to appear in appropriate newspaper(s) or postings at specified location(s)
- require resolution of concerns received from the referrals and/or notification(s)

Water Act Application Review Process



Approvals / Licences

Approvals:

If the Director decides to issue an approval, the applicant will receive an approval with conditions attached. The approval holder will have a certain period of time to construct the project.

Once the project is constructed, the approval holder will be required to submit a Certificate of Completion that certifies the project is completed according to the approval.

Licences:

Following the submission of the required information, consideration will be given to issuance of a licence granting the allocation and use of surface water or groundwater. The licence may be issued providing there is evidence the water source can supply the needs of the applicant and nearby users, and that the diversion of water has no adverse effect on the source, surrounding users, and the environment. Licences may include conditions requiring the licensee to submit water monitoring data, quantities of water diverted, investigation of users impacted by the licensee's diversion and monitoring of nearby sources.

A licence will have an expiry date based on the type of project or on the applicant's estimation of how long the project will be in existence.

Appeals

Decisions made, regarding applications for approvals and/or licences, are subject to appeal. An applicant, a person who submitted a statement of concern, or an individual who is directly affected may submit an appeal to the Environmental Appeal Board.

Licence Fee

Where the applicant requests an annual diversion of water exceeding 62 500 cubic metres, a licence fee is assessed and obtained prior to the issuance of the licence.

Fee Schedule

Annual Diversion Cubic Metres (m ³)	\$ Fee
0 to 62 500 m ³	0
62 501 to 75 000 m ³	\$ 90.00
75 001 to 87 500 m ³	\$ 105.00
87 501 to 100 000 m ³	\$ 120.00
100 001 to 112 500 m ³	\$ 135.00
112 501 to 125 000 m ³	\$ 150.00

For diversions in excess of 125,000 m³, please contact the nearest regional office for licence fee information.

Supplemental Information

The following information is available in a separate package, or when available, on website

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/legislation/index.html>

Submit applications to your nearest regional office:

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/legislation/RegionalContacts.html>