

## Acceptable Solutions: Overview of key changes proposed

Find out more about these (and more) proposed changes and have your say at: [korero.taumataarowai.govt.nz/regulatory/acceptable-solutions](https://korero.taumataarowai.govt.nz/regulatory/acceptable-solutions)

From (today)	To (proposed)	Key benefit/s
<p>Confusion about what Acceptable Solution to use because two or more could apply to a single supply.</p> <p>This was because Acceptable Solutions today take a mix of approaches. One is for a supply type (mixed-use rural) and two are for types of source water (spring/bore water; roof water).</p>	<p>Three stand-alone Acceptable Solutions for different types of supplies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mixed-use rural supplies</li> <li>• small and medium-sized networked supplies</li> <li>• self-supplied buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes it easier for drinking water suppliers to understand if an Acceptable Solution is a fit for their supply.</li> </ul>
<p>Only the Mixed-use Rural Acceptable Solution includes surface water as a water source. There is no stand-alone 'surface water' Acceptable Solution.</p> <p>This means other types of small - medium sized supplies could not use an Acceptable Solution to meet their responsibilities if they used surface water. Instead, they follow the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules.</p>	<p>Surface water can also be used as a potential water source for different types of small or medium-sized drinking water supplies, or self-supplied buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More suppliers will be able use an Acceptable Solution to meet their responsibilities to provide good quality water to the people they serve. (For some suppliers, following an Acceptable Solution may be a more straightforward and cost-effective way to meet their responsibilities than following the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules).</li> <li>• It's clear which Acceptable Solution to use, even when a supplier provides a mix of source water to treat and use as drinking water.</li> </ul>
<p>All 'end-point' treatment systems used at or near buildings as part of Acceptable Solutions must be 'validated' (i.e. meet a range of international standards).</p> <p>(Validated drinking water treatment devices are more costly, but they provide more features, like alerts when maintenance is needed.)</p>	<p>In some situations where a very small number of people (25 or fewer) are supplied water, suppliers/property owners would have the option to choose whether or not to use a validated treatment device when following an Acceptable Solution. This would mainly apply for family homes and small workplaces.</p> <p>Treatment devices that aren't validated are usually less expensive. So, having the option to use these devices enables people to decide on the right balance of effort and cost for them.</p> <p>If the public have access to a building (e.g. café, school, sports club, marae), a validated device would need to be used to minimise the risk of the community members that use these facilities getting sick from the drinking water. This would include those that choose to follow the proposed 'self-supplied building' Acceptable Solution.</p> <p>All devices used would need to meet treatment requirements to ensure they kill germs in the water that could make people sick. This means that not all treatment devices can be used.</p> <p>Suppliers, or the property owners with a treatment system on their land, may want to set-up a maintenance schedule to help ensure the device consistently provides treated water.</p> <p>Guidance would be provided to help people choose and maintain devices that meet Acceptable Solution requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For some supplies, drinking water suppliers will have the option to decide whether or not to use a validated treatment device. Devices that aren't validated can be thousands of dollars cheaper.</li> <li>• A more cost-effective option will make it easier for more people to get essential treatment in place, so more people are likely to have access to good quality drinking water.</li> <li>• People can choose to use a validated treatment device if they want the additional features and reassurance that may be provided by using a device that meets international standards.</li> <li>• Treatment systems that aren't validated can often use new technologies faster than validated ones. For example: new technologies could lead to treatment devices that use less power in the future. Lower power devices are more easily used 'off-grid', which could help remote rural communities get safe drinking water.</li> </ul>
<p>Monitoring and testing requirements are more rigorous for suppliers that use an Acceptable Solution than for suppliers who manage drinking water treatment plants/networks and follow the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules.</p>	<p>Monitoring requirements more closely align with the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simpler, smaller, or lower risk supplies would have monitoring requirements that better match their size and complexity.</li> </ul>
<p>It can be challenging for suppliers to figure out what requirements apply for places where community members come together (e.g. schools and marae) that have their own supply of drinking water. We call these types of supplies 'self-supplied buildings'.</p>	<p>A new Acceptable Solution for self-supplied buildings would make it clear what's required for these supplies.</p> <p>For this type of supply, the number of buildings that can use a single treatment system would increase from three to 10. This increase aligns with requirements for similar supplies that follow the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes it easier for suppliers with self-supplied buildings to use an Acceptable Solution to meet their responsibilities.</li> <li>• Under an Acceptable Solution these supplies wouldn't need to complete a drinking water safety plan - saving time and effort, while providing good quality water.</li> <li>• Provides an additional compliance pathway for self-supplied buildings (marae, schools etc), so they can decide whether following an Acceptable Solution or the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules is right for their supply.</li> </ul>
<p>Some suppliers have told us they find Acceptable Solutions complex. It's sometimes challenging to understand what they have to do to follow them. This makes it challenging for them to determine if an Acceptable Solution or the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules are the best compliance pathway for their supplies.</p>	<p>Legal requirements that suppliers must meet under an Acceptable Solution would be set out in a stand-alone document. This would be supported by a range of practical, 'how to' information resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's quicker and easier for suppliers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– decide if an Acceptable Solution is right for their supply</li> <li>– understand and meet Acceptable Solution requirements into the future</li> <li>– help ensure their community has good quality water to drink.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Some suppliers have told us supplier and property owner responsibilities when installing and maintaining treatment devices are unclear.</p>	<p>Acceptable Solutions provide clearer information on supplier and property owner responsibilities when installing and maintaining treatment devices.</p> <p>Earlier this year, we published a <a href="#">policy statement</a> and <a href="#">flow chart</a> to help clarify these responsibilities.</p>	