



Factsheet: Drinking Water Regulation Report 2025

The **Drinking Water Regulation Report 2025** (DWRR) addresses drinking water supplier performance. It includes data and information for 1 January to 31 December 2025 provided by registered drinking water suppliers and accredited laboratories about the safety and sufficiency of the drinking water they supply.

The Drinking Water Regulation Report 2025 is the first report aligned to the [Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Strategy 2025-28](#), providing a clearer picture of how different supplier groups are performing and where regulatory efforts should be focused.

Coverage of registered drinking water suppliers

- The majority of New Zealanders are supplied by registered drinking water suppliers with core protections in place. Registered suppliers operate 1,595 supplies serving approximately 4.5 million people, or 84% of the population. Councils supply around 4.3 million people.
- Sixteen percent of the population is served by suppliers that have not completed registration or fall outside the registered system, limiting the Authority's visibility of their drinking water risks.

Key treatment barriers

- In 2025, council supplies continued to strengthen key treatment barriers that protect public health:
 - 98% had a bacterial treatment barrier, up from 96% in 2023 (an increase of 91,000 to over 4.2 million people in 2025)
 - 94% had a residual disinfection barrier¹, up from 92% in 2023 (an increase of more than 200,000 to over 4.3 million people in 2025)
 - 90% had a protozoal treatment barrier, up from 76% in 2023 (an increase of more than 415,000 to over 3.9 million people in 2025).
- Fifty-one supplies operated by 22 councils still lacked a protozoal barrier, affecting approximately 311,000 people.
- The Authority remains concerned about suppliers that do not yet have all basic treatment barriers in place and will continue to focus regulatory attention where risks to public health are greatest.

Schools

- Drinking water quality at many self-supplied schools is improving but risks remain.
- The incidence of *E. coli* detections in Ministry of Education school supplies decreased by 16% compared with 2024, while long-term advisories for schools fell from 17 to 7.

¹ Residual disinfection involves adding small amounts of chlorine to keep water disinfected while it travels through pipes to homes.

- Around half of laboratory notifications of *E. coli* detections in 2025 were from self-supplied schools – 108 in total. This was a 16% decrease from 129 in 2024.
- The ratio of supplier-to-laboratory notifications for schools for *E. coli* detections increased from 0.13 in 2022 to 0.52 in 2025, indicating schools are notifying the Authority more consistently when issues are identified.
- Engagement with regulatory requirements and reporting continues to improve across school suppliers.
- The Authority will continue working with the Ministry of Education and school suppliers to improve drinking water safety and reduce risks to students and staff.

Drinking water safety

- There were 221 laboratory notifications of *E. coli* detections in 2025, similar to 219 notifications in 2024 and down from 325 in 2023.
- There were 50 laboratory notifications of *E. coli* detections from council supplies compared to 45 in 2024.
- There were 296 laboratory notifications of chemical MAV exceedances in 2025, down from 380 in 2024.
- In 2025, four registered drinking water supplies recorded nitrate exceedances above the MAV in treated drinking water. These included three Ministry of Education school supplies and one Gore District Council supply.
- In 2025, there were 297 notifications of MAV exceedances from suppliers compared to 517 from laboratories. The Authority notes there were still instances where suppliers did not notify MAV exceedances that were identified by laboratories.
- There were 289 supplier notifications that drinking water is, or may be, unsafe, down from 550 notifications in 2024.
- There were 145 temporary consumer advisories and 88 long-term consumer advisories active during 2025.
- Of the 88 long-term advisories active during 2025, 69 were in place before 2025. Nineteen long-term advisories were closed during the year. At the end of 2025, 31 long-term advisories had been in place for more than three years.
- In 2025, 757 supplies had a Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) lodged with the Authority, compared to 749 in 2024 and 620 in 2023. These supplies serve more than 4.4 million people.

Source water

- Source water monitoring performance continues to improve, providing better information about risks to drinking water supplies.
- In 2025, 3.8 million people were served by council supplies meeting or almost meeting source water monitoring requirements, an increase of almost one million people from 2024.

- The report shows stronger engagement with source water monitoring and risk management requirements across council suppliers.
- Identifying and managing source water risks remains an important part of preventing contamination before water reaches treatment plants.

Performance against the Rules

- Compliance with the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (the Rules) provides assurance that public health risks to drinking water are being managed effectively.
- Large council suppliers are improving performance against the Rules. Improvements since 2024 include:
 - large council supplies meeting or almost meeting bacterial treatment requirements increased from 61% to 77%
 - large council supplies meeting or almost meeting protozoal treatment requirements increased from 68% to 76%
 - large treatment plants meeting or almost meeting chemical monitoring requirements increased from 65% to 81%.
- In 2025, only 45% of large council supplies met all distribution network safety assurance measures, making distribution systems an important area for further improvement.
- While council supplies are increasingly meeting the compliance requirements of the Rules, some supplies are still not reporting as required. We expect to see suppliers improve their reporting rates in future reporting years.

Regulatory focus

- The Authority will continue to use evidence from the report to target its regulatory efforts where they will have the greatest impact on public health. Priorities include:
 - closing remaining gaps in basic treatment barriers
 - improving reporting rates and compliance with the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules
 - reducing long-term consumer advisories
 - continuing to improve the quality of information used to regulate drinking water suppliers so effort can remain focused on the supplies and risks that matter the most
 - taking stronger action where significant risks are not being addressed.