

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Will I be able to change my grade after grades are published on May 1st?**
The published letter grades and scores are not subject to change after May 1st until the next annual letter grade and score is published.
- 2. What is the grading period?**
Grades are based on the calendar year, January 1st through December 31st.
- 3. What method am I required to use to notify my customers of the water system's letter grade?**
The final letter grade and scores must be included with the annual Consumer Confidence Report (a.k.a. Annual Water Quality Report) that is posted on the water systems website.
- 4. Who do I call to check on open significant deficiencies, violations issued during the calendar year, and compliance with Administrative Orders?**
Attached is a map with contact information for the LDH OPH Bureau of Engineering Regions and Districts. Information is also available online at <https://sdw.ldh.la.gov>.
- 5. If I experienced a water outage due to a natural disaster, will that result in a deduction of points from my grade?**
Water outages during a natural disaster event such as tornados, hurricanes, winter weather – ice storms, etc. are not included in determining the water system's grade.
- 6. I issued 5 boil advisories this year, will that result in a deduction of points from my grade?**
No, boil *advisories* issued by the water system are not included in determining the water system's grade; however, boil *notices* are included in the grade. A boil notice is an official order issued by the state health officer to the owner/users of a specific water supply, directing that water from that supply be boiled according to directions, or otherwise disinfected prior to human consumption.
- 7. My sanitary survey was conducted during the last quarter of the grade year. The 90 day due date will be after December 31 of the grade year. Will the significant deficiencies be included in that year's grade?**
No. Sanitary surveys conducted between October 1st and December 31st of the calendar year will not be included in the grade determination for that calendar year. If the 90 day due date is after December 31st, the significant deficiencies will be included in determining the grade for the next calendar year.
- 8. What documents must be submitted to LDH OPH?**
Water systems must submit documentation of the following: 1) a rate study, 2) an annual report, a financial report or an audit report, 3) a complaint log, and 4) extra credit (an asset

management plan, a storage assessment and maintenance program, a well assessment and maintenance program, participation in a capacity development program approved by LDH OPH, and/or participation in a management training program approved by LDH OPH.. If the water system has any open significant deficiencies that have been resolved, documentation must be submitted to LDH OPH.

9. How do I submit the required documents?

Documents must be submitted through the LDH Grade Rule Portal: <https://pwsgrades.ldh.la.gov/Portal>. Directions for access and submitting documents through the portal can be found on our website: https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/engineering/Grade_Rule/Grade-Rule-Portal-User-Guide.pdf.

10. When are the required documents due?

January 31st each year

11. Where can I find information about management training sessions?

Management training information is available at <https://ldh.la.gov/page/watergrade>. LDH-approved vendors include, but are not limited to, LRWA, TMB and Communities Unlimited. Contact the vendor to set up a local training or to register for a scheduled training. Contact information is available at the bottom of our website: <https://ldh.la.gov/page/watergrade>.

12. Who must attend management training in order to receive extra credit points?

All decision makers for a PWS must attend one 4-hour LDH approved management training session. Such personnel would include, but is not limited to: mayors, board presidents, superintendents, public works directors, city clerks, council members, aldermen, board members, designated operator in charge, chief financial officers, owners, etc. The number required to attend should be based on the organizational structure of the system. For example:

- Private Non-Profit: Board President and Board Members;
- Private for Profit: Owner/Owner's Designee, Regional Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operational Officer, etc.;
- Municipality/Parish: Mayor/Parish President, City Council/Aldermen, City Manager/Parish Administrator, etc.

13. How many people have to attend management training?

The expectation is that all decision makers attend the management training to maintain the extra points each year for the grade. The training is designed for decision makers, including but not limited to those individuals who make decisions on budget, funding, policies, staffing, etc. We encourage all involved in the decision making process for the public water system to attend to better understand the rules, regulations, and requirements for public water systems.

14. Our board attended management training when they have to attend again to maintain extra credit points?

Management training is valid for 5 years except when there is a change in the decision makers for the PWS.

15. Where can I find information about asset management?

Asset management information is available at <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/about-asset-management>. Additional information is available on our website <https://ldh.la.gov/page/watergrade>.

16. What is Capacity Development and how can I participate in the program?

The Capacity Development program was established to ensure that a PWS has the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to achieve, maintain, and plan for compliance with applicable drinking water standards given available resources and the characteristics of the service population. Capacity Development assessments completed for a Drinking Water Revolving Loan or due to an Administrative Order do not qualify for extra credit. For more information or to participate in the program, contact the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Team at 225-342-7499.

17. My water system is an apartment complex, mobile home park, homeowners' association, etc. that does not charge for water service. What do I submit for the rate assessment?

The business model for some community water systems may include a flat rate for all services provided, such as renting a space in a mobile home park, townhouse, or apartment complex, annual HOA dues. A CPA or financial advisor would be able to assist you with the rate assessment. LDH will accept a financial "plan" from your financial advisor(s) that addresses/presents sustainability criteria for the long-term operations of the water system. The CPA/financial advisor can review the finances to determine water system expenses and how much of the lot rent, annual dues, or other revenue covers operation and maintenance of the water system. The CPA can provide an assessment that includes lot rent or annual dues adjustments to provide for the water system's future sustainability. Additional information is available on our website at https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/engineering/Grade_Rule/Grade-Rule-Common-Mistakes-and-Helpful-Tips.pdf.