
APPENDIX 1: RANKING CRITERIA FOR DWSRF PRIORITY LIST

1. Documented health risks

a. Acute health risks - 120 points maximum

A waterborne disease outbreak or other waterborne emergency such as an interruption in a key water treatment process or a natural or man-made disaster that disrupts the water supply or distribution system.

E. coli or other pathogens - two or more boil orders in any 12-month period. Risk must be documented as a reoccurring and unresolved problem that appears to be **beyond the direct control** of the water supplier. *E. coli* Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) exceedance in the distribution system. A detection of *E. coli* or other pathogens in the source water where the system does not currently provide 4-log treatment of viruses.

Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) treatment technique violation such as a single exceedance of the maximum allowable turbidity limit or sources that have been under the direct influence of surface water and have not resolved that designation.

Nitrate or nitrite MCL violations - MCL violation must be confirmed through routine and check sampling as required by DEQ.

Chlorine dioxide Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) violation where one or more samples taken in the distribution system the day following an exceedance of the MRDL at the entry point also exceed the MRDL.

Guidance for ranking: For unfiltered surface water, use 70% of maximum points in this category unless there have also been documented problems with turbidity, fecal contamination or disease outbreaks. Award an additional 10% of maximum points for each of the following: boil order resulting from a turbidity violation, fecal MCL violation, documented disease outbreak. If disease outbreak has been documented, award maximum points.

For filtered surface water systems, a Contact Time violation without boil orders or *E. coli* MCL violations, etc., should receive 50% of maximum points under this category. Award additional points for the additional violations.

Example: an unfiltered surface water system has had turbidity violations resulting in a boil order, as well as a *E. coli* MCL violation. There have been no documented disease outbreaks. The system would get 70% + 10% + 10% = 90% of maximum points in this category.

b. Non-acute health risks - 60 points maximum

Groundwater Rule - significant deficiency(ies) identified in a sanitary survey. Montana Chlorination Rule violations.

Lead and Copper Rule - lead and/or copper action level exceedance.

Inorganic chemicals and/or organic chemicals (including volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) and synthetic organic chemicals (SOCs)) maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedance. MCL violations may or may not have occurred.

Radionuclide contaminants (radium, uranium, gross alpha emitters) maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedance. MCL violations may or may not have occurred.

Disinfection byproducts maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedances. MCL violations may or may not have occurred. Disinfectant residuals (not including chlorine dioxide) maximum disinfectant residual level (MRDL) exceedance. Disinfection byproduct precursors (total organic carbon (TOC)) treatment technique violation.

Guidance for ranking: Start with 50% of maximum points in this category for lead and copper or other chemical violations and go up or down in 10% increments depending on the severity of the problem.

2. Proactive compliance measures - 50 points maximum

Improvements in infrastructure, management or operations of a public water system that are proactive measures to remain in compliance with current regulatory requirements, to ensure compliance with future requirements, or to prevent future, potential SDWA violations.

Guidance for ranking: If a system is reacting to an existing documented health violation under category 1a or 1b, it should receive no points under this category. Emphasis should be toward a deliberate proactive approach to potential health problems. A system with points awarded in this category typically will currently be in compliance with most or all SDWA regulations.

3. Potential health risks

a. Microbiological health risks - 25 points maximum

Total coliform bacteria (non-acute) - two or more Level 1 assessments (under Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR)) in any 24-month period.

Reoccurring and unresolved problems with non-coliform growth that are beyond the direct control of the water supplier, and result in inconclusive coliform bacteria analyses.

Water distribution pressures that routinely fall below 35 psi at ground level in the mains, or 20 psi at ground level in customers' plumbing systems. The problems must be the result of circumstances beyond the direct control of the water supplier.

Documented water main leaks or main breaks.

b. Nitrate or nitrite detects - 25 points maximum

Nitrate or nitrite detections between 5 mg/L and 10 mg/L within the last 24-months.

c. Chemical contaminant health risks - 20 points maximum

Chemical contaminant detections are approaching the MCL.

Radionuclide contaminant detections are approaching the MCL.

Documented lead service lines.

Guidance for ranking: No additional points should be given in this category for contaminants already addressed in categories 1 or 2. However, if a project scope includes remedies for different types of violations, it should receive points in each of the applicable categories.

4. Construction of a regional public water supply that would serve two or more existing public water supplies - 30 points.

Regionalization would increase the technical, financial and/or managerial capacity of the overall system, would result in some improvement to public health, or bring a public water system into compliance with the SDWA.

5. Affordability (Only one applicable - maximum 20 points).

Affordability is based on a community's rates (water and sewer combined or water only) as a percentage of their median household income (MHI). Expected average household combined water and sewer user rates, including debt retirement and O&M are:

- greater than 3.5% of MHI - 20 pts
- between 2.5% and 3.5% (inclusive) of MHI - 15 pts
- between 1.0% and 2.5% (inclusive) of MHI - 10 pts
- 1.0% or less of MHI - 5 pts

Expected average household user rates for water only, including debt retirement and O&M are:

- greater than 2.6% of MHI - 20 pts
- between 1.6% and 2.6% (inclusive) of MHI - 15 pts
- between 0.1% and 1.6% (inclusive) of MHI - 10 pts
- 0.1% or less of MHI - 5 pts

DWSRF Priority List Bypass Procedures

If it is determined by DEQ that a project or projects are not ready to proceed or that the project sponsors have chosen not to use the DWSRF funds, other projects may be funded in an order different from that indicated on the priority list. If DEQ chooses to bypass higher ranked projects, it should follow the bypass procedure.

The bypass procedure is as follows:

1. DEQ shall notify all projects which are ranked higher than the proposed project on the DWSRF priority list unless it is known that a higher project will not be using DWSRF funds.

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2. The notified water systems shall have 15 calendar days to respond with any objections they may have to the funding of the lower ranked project.
 3. DEQ shall address, within a reasonable time period, any objections received.

Emergency Bypass Procedures

If DEQ determines that immediate attention to an unanticipated failure is required to protect public health, a project may be funded with DWSRF funds whether or not the project is on the DWSRF priority list. DEQ will not be required to solicit comments from other projects on the priority list regarding emergency funding.