

Oklahoma Water Rights

THE ESSENTIALS

The OWRB appropriates groundwater and surface water through water use permitting. Permits are required for all uses of water except domestic use, which refers to using less than 5 acre-feet of water per year or irrigating less than 3 acres of land.

Domestic use does NOT require a permit.

**1 acre-foot = 325,851 gallons
(1 foot of water covering 1 acre)**

"I've always done it this way" is not protection. Historical use does not automatically give you rights.

When do I need a water permit?

- ✓ Irrigation for commercial crops (marijuana, hemp, vegetables, nurseries, etc.)
- ✓ Selling water to oil & gas companies or other businesses
- ✓ Municipal, industrial, or commercial use

Not sure? Just ask! It never hurts to check before you start using water. Unpermitted use can result in penalties.

There are two types of permits: groundwater (wells) and surface water (streams, lakes, ponds).

Groundwater permits protect your wells from interference & encroachment on your water right.

Surface water permits establish your legal priority date. Earlier permit dates have priority during shortages.

Help Is Available!

OWRB staff can help you complete your application. Call us at (405) 530-8800 before you make the trip, and we will set up an appointment.

Applications, maps, and helpful information can be found at oklahoma.gov/owrb. Additional questions? Email us at waterpermitting@owrb.ok.gov.



OKLAHOMA
Water Resources Board