




MEMORANDUM

Date: March 29, 2017
Title: Guidelines for Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems
Issued by: Harlan L. Kelly, Jr., General Manager 

San Francisco's Non-potable Water Program

In September 2012, the City and County of San Francisco adopted the Onsite Water Reuse for Commercial, Multi-family, and Mixed Use Development Ordinance. Commonly known as the Non-potable Water Ordinance, it added Article 12C to the San Francisco Health Code, allowing the collection, treatment, and use of alternate water sources for non-potable applications in individual buildings and at the district-scale. Alternate water sources include rainwater, stormwater, graywater, blackwater, and foundation drainage for non-potable applications such as toilet flushing, irrigation, cooling tower make-up, and other approved end uses.

Article 12C became a mandatory requirement in July 2015 for all new development projects of 250,000 square feet or more of gross floor area. These development projects are required to install and operate an onsite non-potable water system to treat and reuse available graywater, rainwater and foundation drainage for toilet and urinal flushing and irrigation purposes.

San Francisco's Non-potable Water Program created a streamlined permitting process to provide oversight and guidance for the installation and operation of non-potable water systems. The Non-potable Water Program established water quality criteria, monitoring, and reporting requirements to allow the use of alternate water sources.

Projects implementing single-building or district-scale non-potable water systems in compliance with Article 12C shall complete the process below:

1. Submit a Water Budget Application and Water Use Calculator to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)
2. Submit a Non-potable Implementation Plan to the SFPUC (applicable only to district-scale projects)
3. Submit an Engineering Report to the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)
4. Obtain building and plumbing permits from the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection's Plumbing Inspection Division (PID) and complete construction of non-potable water system
5. Obtain encroachment permits from San Francisco Public Works (SFPW), if applicable

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6. Schedule cross-connection test with SFPUC and SFPDH
7. Obtain a Permit to Operate from SFPDH
8. Conduct ongoing monitoring, reporting, and inspections

Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems

Development projects implementing district-scale non-potable water systems may seek an alternative compliance approach to Article 12C. According to Section 12C.4(d) of the San Francisco Health Code, the SFPUC General Manager may approve alternative compliance for district-scale non-potable water systems that will meet the purpose and objectives of Article 12C, in accordance with guidelines and rules established by the General Manager. The Guidelines for Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems are hereby attached.



Guidelines for Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems

District-scale Non-potable Water Systems

The Non-potable Water Ordinance added Article 12C to the San Francisco Health Code requiring all new multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use developments over 250,000 gross square feet to install, operate and maintain onsite non-potable water systems.

To comply with Article 12C, projects may privately own and operate a district-scale non-potable water system as permitted through San Francisco's Non-Potable Water Program. As part of the approval process, all district-scale non-potable water systems shall submit a Water Budget Application and Non-potable Implementation Plan to the SFPUC for review and approval. District-scale projects proposing to include infrastructure in the public right-of-way must also be reviewed by the SFPUC for utility conflicts prior to receiving the necessary encroachment permit from San Francisco Public Works.

District-scale projects located within San Francisco's designated recycled water use areas and subject to compliance with Article 12C may request an exemption from applicable sections of the Recycled Water Ordinance (Article 22 of the San Francisco Public Works Code) pertaining to the installation of recycled water pipelines in the street. The SFPUC General Manager may approve an exemption if the district's non-potable water conveyance system would perform the same function as the recycled water pipelines.

Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems

The SFPUC General Manager may approve an alternative compliance approach for a development project's district-scale non-potable water system, as long as the project achieves compliance with the purposes and objectives of Article 12C. District-scale projects seeking alternative compliance must prepare a Water Budget Application and a Non-potable Implementation Plan for review and approval by the SFPUC. The SFPUC may consider alternative compliance as one or more of the following:

a) Private-Public Partnership District System

For projects subject to mandatory compliance with Article 12C, as well as projects seeking voluntary compliance with Article 12C, the SFPUC may consider partnership agreements for ownership, operation, maintenance, and retail service of the district-scale non-potable water system.

b) Public District System

The SFPUC may accept an offer of dedication of a district-scale non-potable water system's treatment and/or conveyance system that is constructed in accordance with all applicable utility standards and specifications, without cost to the SFPUC.

c) Negotiated Cost Share with the SFPUC

A district-scale non-potable water system located within two miles of an existing SFPUC recycled water treatment facility may achieve compliance with Article 12C by using recycled water from the SFPUC treatment facility and entering into a negotiated cost share system extension agreement with the SFPUC.

d) District Systems Utilizing SFPUC Infrastructure

Privately owned district-scale non-potable water systems may request to utilize SFPUC infrastructure for the operation of their system. The SFPUC may consider the use of its infrastructure which may include but is not limited to its recycled water pipelines and/or sanitary sewers for purposes of sewer mining. All district-scale non-potable water systems proposing the use of SFPUC sanitary sewers shall operate in accordance with the SFPUC's applicable standards for sewer mining.