

ONTARIO'S DRINKING WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARD

POCKET GUIDE

Environmental Assessment & Permissions Branch
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

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The Drinking Water Quality Management Standard (DWQMS) was developed in partnership between the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and Ontario's water sector.

The version of the DWQMS referenced in this pocket guide is the final version posted on Ontario's Environmental Registry on April 6, 2017.

Remember, this is only a summary. To be clear about your specific legal requirements, you should refer to the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002, (SDWA) and the regulations and other instruments made under that Act.

For more information, please visit www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater or call the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923.

Copies of this report can be obtained by contacting the Environmental Assessment and Permissions Branch of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change at MDWLP@ontario.ca.

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Introduction

Justice Dennis O'Connor, in Part Two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, recommended the adoption of quality management for municipal drinking water systems. It was also recommended that a quality management standard specifically designed for drinking water systems be developed and implemented in Ontario, thus leading to the creation of the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard (DWQMS or the Standard).

The adoption of quality management systems (QMS) is not new to the drinking water community in Ontario; however the requirement to implement the DWQMS is now mandated through the SDWA.

The Pocket Guide

This guide was developed to provide easy access to:

- Relevant terms and definitions,
- A list all of the elements of the DWQMS ,including a plain language summary and interpretation of what they mean, and
- Further information about each element of the DWQMS in *Implementing Quality Management: A Guide for Ontario's Drinking Water Systems*.

The Municipal Drinking Water Licensing Program

The Licensing Program is the approvals framework for municipal residential drinking water systems. In order to be issued a Municipal Drinking Water Licence (Licence), the ministry requires an owner to have the following:

A Drinking Water Works Permit (DWWP)

- a permit to establish or alter a drinking water system

A Permit To Take Water (PTTW)

- a valid PTTW is required to be in place

An Accepted Operational Plan

- must satisfy the requirements of the DWQMS
- documentation of an operating authority's QMS

An Accredited Operating Authority

- a third-party audit of an operating authority's QMS is the basis for accreditation

A Financial Plan

- as required under the Financial Plans Regulation (O. Reg. 453/07)

Quality Management Systems

The purpose of a QMS is to:

- establish policy and objectives and achieve those objectives, and
- direct and control an organization with regard to quality.

Quality management for Ontario's municipal drinking water systems occurs through the development and implementation of a QMS for each system based upon the requirements of the DWQMS.

The Drinking Water Quality Management Standard

The DWQMS sets out a framework for the operating authority and the owner of a drinking water system to develop a QMS that is relevant and appropriate for the system.

The DWQMS contains elements of both the ISO 9001 standard with respect to management systems and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) standard with respect to product safety. The DWQMS also incorporates the HACCP approach to risk assessment and reflects the multi-barrier approach for drinking water safety.

The DWQMS approach emphasizes the importance of:

- a proactive and preventative approach to management strategies that identify and manage risks to public health,
- establishing and documenting management procedures,
- clearly identifying roles and responsibilities, and
- continual improvement of your management system.

Director's Directions – Minimum Requirements for Operational Plans, Municipal Drinking Water Systems

The Director's Direction, issued under the authority of the SDWA, outlines the minimum content of operational plans. It also establishes rules respecting document retention, public disclosure of information and other requirements that the Director considers necessary for the purposes of the SDWA and its regulations.

The Operational Plan

Operational plans are the written documentation of the operating authority's QMS developed for a 'subject system' to meet the requirements of the DWQMS.

Accreditation

In the context of the Licensing Program, accreditation is the verification by a third-party accreditation body that an operating authority has a QMS in place that meets the requirements of the DWQMS. All municipal residential drinking water systems must be operated by an accredited operating authority.

Accreditation Protocol

The document titled "Accreditation Protocol – Operating Authorities – Municipal Drinking Water Systems" outlines the processes related to the establishment and administration of an accreditation program by a designated accreditation body.

The protocol provides instructions to the accreditation body for:

- Options for accreditation,
- Assignment of auditors,
- Public notification of audit results,
- Audit cycles, and
- Appeals.

Mandatory Considerations for the Risk Assessment

The document titled “Potential Hazardous Events for Municipal Residential Drinking Water Systems to Consider in the DWQMS Risk Assessment” outlines the potential hazardous events and associated hazards that are, at a minimum, required to be assessed as part of risk assessment that is undertaken to conform to the requirements of Element 7 of the DWQMS.

Best Management Practices

A Best Management Practice (BMP) is a program, process or procedure which, if implemented, may assist the owner and operating authority of a drinking water system in the delivery of safe, high quality drinking water; provide mechanisms to optimize efficiencies within the drinking water system and/or QMS, and provide information to assist in future planning for the systems.

BMPs may be identified through formal guidance published by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, opportunities for improvement identified by a third-party auditor, information received at a formal training session or DWQMS workshop, industry-published best practice documents, or formal/informal sharing and discussion of policies and procedures with other drinking water system owners or operating authorities.

Terms and Definitions

Applicable Legislative and Regulatory Requirements – the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 (SDWA), the Ontario Water Resources Act, 1990 and all regulations and instruments issued under these Acts which are associated with drinking water.

Audit – a systematic and documented verification process that involves objectively obtaining and evaluating documents and processes to determine whether a Quality Management System conforms to the requirements of the DWQMS.

Calendar Year – A period of one year beginning and ending with the dates conventionally accepted as marking the beginning and end of a year (January 1st to December 31st).

Consumer – the drinking water end user.

Corrective Action – action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity of the QMS with the requirements of the DWQMS or other undesirable situation.

Critical Control Limit – the point at which a Critical Control Point response procedure is initiated.

Critical Control Point – an essential step or point in the Subject System at which control can be applied by the Operating Authority to prevent or eliminate a Drinking Water Health Hazard or to reduce it to an acceptable level.

Document – has the same meaning as “document” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Director – means the director appointed for the purposes of s.15 of the SDWA.

Distribution System – has the same meaning as “distribution system” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Drinking Water Health Hazard – has the same meaning as “drinking water health hazard” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Drinking Water Quality Management Standard (DWQMS) – has the same meaning as Quality Management Standard for Drinking Water Systems approved under s. 21 of the SDWA.

Drinking Water System – has the same meaning as “drinking water system” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Environmental Bill of Rights Registry – has the same meaning as “Registry” defined in s.2(1) of the SDWA.

Municipal Drinking Water System – has the same meaning as “municipal drinking water system” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Municipal Residential Drinking Water System – has the same meaning as “large municipal residential system” or “small municipal residential system” defined in s. 1(1) of O. Reg. 170/03.

Operating Authority – means, in respect of a Subject System, the person or entity that is given responsibility by the Owner for the operation, management, maintenance or alteration of the Subject System.

Operational Plan – means, in respect of a Subject System, the Operational Plan required by the Director’s Direction.

Operational Subsystem – means a part of a Municipal Residential Drinking Water System operated by a single Operating Authority and designated by the Owner as being an Operational Subsystem.

Owner – has the same meaning as “owner” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Preventive Action – action to prevent the occurrence of nonconformity of the QMS with the requirements of the DWQMS or other undesirable situation.

Primary Disinfection – has the same meaning as “primary disinfection” defined in s. 1(1) of O. Reg. 170/03.

Public – Subject System consumers and stakeholders.

Quality Management System (QMS) – a system to:

- a) establish policy and objectives, and to achieve those objectives, and
- b) direct and control an organization with regard to quality.

Quality Management System Policy – means the policy described in Element 2 developed for the Subject System or Subject Systems

Record – a document stating results achieved or providing proof of activities performed.

Secondary Disinfection – has the same meaning as “secondary disinfection” defined in s. 1(1) of O. Reg. 170/03.

Subject System – means:

- a) a municipal residential drinking water system where the system is operated by one operating authority, or
- b) an operational subsystem where two or more parts of a municipal residential drinking water system are operated by different operating authorities.

Supplier – an organization or person that provides a product or service that affects drinking water quality.

Top Management – a person, persons or a group of people at the highest management level within an Operating Authority that makes decisions respecting the QMS and recommendations to the Owner respecting the Subject System or Subject Systems.

Treatment System – has the same meaning as “treatment system” defined in s. 2(1) of the SDWA.

Additional Information

Additional information about the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard and the Municipal Drinking Water Licensing Program is available at ontario.ca/drinkingwater. Information may also be obtained by contacting the Approvals & Licensing Section of the Environmental Permissions & Approvals Branch at MDWLP@Ontario.ca or 416-314-4300.

Key Documents

The following documents provide additional information about the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard:

- [Drinking Water Quality Management Standard, February 2017](#)
- [Potential Hazardous Events for Municipal Residential Drinking Water Systems to Consider in the DWQMS Risk Assessment, February 2017](#)
- [Accreditation Protocol: Operating Authorities for Municipal Drinking Water Systems, November 2016](#)
- [Director's Directions: Minimum Requirements for Operational Plans, July 2007](#)
- [Implementing Quality Management, a Guide for Ontario's Drinking Water Systems, July 2007](#)

PLAN and DO Elements of the DWQMS

DWQMS Element 1 – Quality Management System

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a Quality Management System that meets the requirements of this Standard.

DO – The Operating Authority shall establish and maintain the Quality Management System in accordance with the requirements of this Standard and the policies and procedures documented in the Operational Plan.

What does it mean?

Element 1 of the DWQMS requires that you develop and document a QMS that meets the requirements of the DWQMS. The PLAN elements of the DWQMS outline what must be documented in the operational plan. By completing each of the PLAN sections you will end up with a description of what you have in place for all of the elements in the DWQMS and the majority of your operational plan will be developed.

The DO requirement of this element requires that you establish and maintain the QMS according to what you have written in your operational plan, and according to the requirements of the DWQMS.

The operational plan is a document or series of documents that outlines the processes and procedures for the overall quality management of the drinking water system. For smaller systems, these may all be contained in one document. For medium and larger-sized systems, the operational plan may be one main document which outlines key points, then refers to other documents, which are located throughout the water system. It is not a requirement that all documents in the operational plan be collated, but they should be thorough, complete, and easy to follow.

DWQMS Element 2 – Quality Management System Policy

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a Quality Management System Policy that provides the foundation for the Quality Management System, and:

- a) includes a commitment to the maintenance and continual improvement of the Quality Management System,
- b) includes a commitment to the Consumer to provide safe drinking water,
- c) includes a commitment to comply with applicable legislation and regulations, and
- d) is in a form that can be communicated to all Operating Authority personnel, the Owner and the Public.

DO – The Operating Authority shall establish and maintain a Quality Management System that is consistent with the Quality Management System Policy.

What does it mean?

Element 2 of the DWQMS requires the development of a QMS policy. A policy is the driver for the QMS – firm documented commitments to demonstrate the operating authority's assurance that quality management is important in their management and operation of the drinking water system. The PLAN component outlines three main commitments that must be in the policy: to maintain and continually improve the QMS, to comply with applicable legislation and regulations, and to provide safe drinking water to the consumer. In this manner, the organization's commitment to drinking water quality is documented. The PLAN component of this element also requires that the policy be in a form that can be easily communicated.

The DO component requires that the operating authority ensures the QMS is consistent with the commitments made in the QMS policy.

Additional commitments:

The policy statement can include additional commitments beyond the ones listed above. Keep in mind that if additional commitments are made in the policy statement, the external auditor will seek proof that they are being met. As these additional commitments are not a required part of the DWQMS, they do not have to be documented in the operational plan; however some organizations may choose to do so.

Examples of additional commitments are:

- Promoting resource stewardship, including conservation;
- Water conservation and source protection;
- Being a quality leader in the water sector;
- Being an active participant in formal and/or informal industry associations or working groups;
- Promoting energy conservation;
- Reviewing the policy at least once annually, to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the drinking water system;
- Conducting business in an environmentally responsible manner;
- Implementing and/or maintaining other management systems (such as an environmental management systems / ISO 14001);
- Ensuring that the drinking water system remains financially sustainable;
- Ensuring that all Owners and Top Management understand their oversight responsibilities under s.19 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002.

DWQMS Element 3 – Commitment and Endorsement

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall contain a written endorsement of its contents by Top Management and the Owner.

DO – Top Management shall provide evidence of its commitment to an effective Quality Management System by:

- a) ensuring that a Quality Management System is in place that meets the requirements of this Standard,
- b) ensuring that the Operating Authority is aware of all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements,
- c) communicating the Quality Management System according to the procedure for communications,
- d) determining, obtaining or providing the resources needed to maintain and continually improve the Quality Management System.

What does it mean?

This element is critical to a successful QMS, and should be put into place early during implementation. The PLAN component of Element 3 requires that the operational plan is endorsed, in writing, by top management and the owner. The DO component of Element 3 requires that top management is able to prove its commitment to the QMS. Top management must be aware of the QMS, and provide direction and resources. If top management is not the owner then it must work with them to obtain the resources required to implement the QMS. There are broad responsibilities for top management outlined in the DO component of Element 3. Documents and records that will be created as a result of implementing the QMS will help provide proof of management commitment.

Top management commitment is a crucial part of a successful QMS implementation. Without the authority, direction and support of top management, it would be very difficult to plan the implementation and to create a QMS. The QMS must be adopted as an integral part of your organization and necessary resources must be provided, from now and into the future. The lack of top management commitment can be a major reason for the failure of management systems.

The DWQMS definition for top management requires that your top management must be people that meet the following criteria:

- They work within the operating authority,
- They will make decisions about your QMS,
- They will make recommendations to the owner about the subject system or subject systems, and
- They are at the highest level of management within the operating authority making these decisions and recommendations.

Top management does not have to be a single person. The intent is, however, that top management includes all levels of management, including the highest corporate level if appropriate. Some examples of top management are provided below.

Small private operating authority overseeing a small number of drinking water systems in part of Ontario – Top management could consist of the President and the Board Members of the operating authority.

Large private operating authority overseeing several drinking water systems across the province – Top management could consist of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board Members of the operating authority. In addition, district managers responsible for certain parts of the province would also be part of top management.

Small municipal operating authority – For municipalities that operate only one or two small drinking water systems, top management could consist of the Water System manager and the Water Committee Chair (usually a member of council that liaises between drinking water system staff and the mayor and council).

Large municipal operating authority – For municipalities that operate several systems, top management could consist of two levels – corporate and operational. Corporate top management could consist of the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Water Supply. Operational top management could consist of the system managers and supervisors.

Keep in mind that the DWQMS is not intended to be prescriptive – you make the decision on who is top management based on your particular organizational structure. You can also decide the frequency or change that will require re-endorsement of the plan (e.g., related to ‘people’ such as staff changes or a new municipal council, related to ‘content’ or updates to the operational plan, and/or related to ‘time’ such as seeking annual re-endorsement).

DWQMS Element 4 – QMS Representative

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall identify a Quality Management System representative.

DO – Top Management shall appoint and authorize a Quality Management System representative who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall:

- a) administer the Quality Management System by ensuring that processes and procedures needed for the Quality Management System are established and maintained,
- b) report to Top Management on the performance of the Quality Management System and any need for improvement,
- c) ensure that current versions of documents required by the Quality Management System are being used at all times,
- d) ensure that personnel are aware of all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements that pertain to their duties for the operation of the Subject System, and
- e) promote awareness of the Quality Management System throughout the Operating Authority.

What does it mean?

Element 4 of the DWQMS describes specific requirements for a special role in the QMS – the Quality Management System Representative – who is appointed by top management. Element 4 requires that the operational plan identifies a QMS representative. The responsibilities and authorities for that specific role are prescribed in parts a) to e) of the DO component. The QMS representative is generally responsible for the QMS, and channels important QMS information to top management. The QMS representative may be, but is not required to be, from top management. The QMS representative can also be the same person as your QMS Implementation Lead.

When defining this role within your organization, it's important that you also consider knowledge management and staff turnover. While the QMS representative will lead the administration of the QMS, it is important that other staff members are both involved in and aware of the process. Relying on a single person to maintain your entire QMS can lead to significant challenges should this person not be available, retire or accept another position.

The QMS Representative must be aware of his/her responsibilities. Top Management should also be aware of these responsibilities – and provide the QMS Representative with sufficient authority to ensure that the necessary processes are established, implemented and maintained throughout the organization.

Many aspects of the QMS will have direct linkages to other areas of responsibility, such as human resources (Element 10), records management (Element 5), operations (Element 11, 16 & 17), customer outreach (Element 12), infrastructure planning (Elements 14 & 15) and emergency planning (Element 18).

While the QMS representative may not necessarily be expected to carry out all activities associated with these areas of responsibility, they will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the DWQMS have been, and continue to be, met.

For example:

Element 10 of the DWQMS requires documentation of competencies for personnel performing duties directly affecting drinking water. It also requires that activities are undertaken to ensure that competencies are met and maintained. Should key responsibilities of a position change, it could directly impact the competencies for the position. While the QMS Representative may not have the responsibility of establishing or updating the responsibilities of a position – such a change will impact the documentation in the Operational Plan.

DWQMS Element 5 – Document and Records Control

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for Document and Records control that describes how:

- a) Documents required by the Quality Management System are:
 - i. kept current, legible and readily identifiable
 - ii. retrievable
 - iii. stored, protected, retained and disposed of, and
- b) Records required by the Quality Management System are:
 - i. kept legible, and readily identifiable
 - ii. retrievable
 - iii. stored, protected, retained and disposed of.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure for Document and Records control and shall ensure that the Quality Management System documentation for the Subject System includes:

- a) the Operational Plan and its associated policies and procedures,
- b) Documents and Records determined by the Operating Authority as being needed to ensure the effective planning, operation and control of its operations, and
- c) the results of internal and external Audits and management reviews.

What does it mean?

Element 5 of the DWQMS requires that you establish a process to manage and control the documents and records needed by the QMS, and that you need a procedure to describe this process. A document and records control process is necessary to ensure that documents are kept up-to-date with changes in your operations and changes in applicable legislation and regulations, and that documents and records are legible, and can be easily located and identified. The procedure must also describe how documents and records are stored (so that they are protected from damage or loss), define record retention times, and outline methods for disposal afterwards.

The DO component of this Element requires that you follow the procedure. It also details what documentation constitutes the documented QMS. The creation and management of these documents and records are implicitly covered by following the procedure.

It may not be necessary to create a new document or records management system if you have one currently in place. However, you should review your document and records management system and determine if changes are necessary to meet the requirements of the DWQMS.

When developing or updating your procedure for document and records control, you may want to consider:

- The difference between controlling hard copy and electronic documents;
- The role that staff orientation and training play in ensuring consistent application of the procedure;
- Mechanisms for protection that include both physical protection (e.g., secured access, where required) and protection of the contents (e.g., protection from alteration, where required);
- Linkages to existing corporate policies / procedures relating to records management, and how these linkages will be maintained or considered during any update to the corporate policies / procedures;
- How and when disposal may occur (at what frequency and by what method will documents or records be disposed).

DWQMS Element 6 – Drinking Water System

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document, as applicable:

- a) for the Subject System:
 - i. the name of the Owner and Operating Authority,
 - ii. if the system includes equipment that provides Primary Disinfection and/or Secondary Disinfection:
 - A. a description of the system including all applicable Treatment System processes and Distribution System components,
 - B. a Treatment System process flow chart,
 - C. a description of the water source, including:
 - I. general characteristics of the raw water supply,
 - II. common event-driven fluctuations, and
 - III. any resulting operational challenges and threats.
 - iii. if the system does not include equipment that provides Primary Disinfection or Secondary Disinfection:
 - A. a description of the system including all Distribution System components, and
 - B. a description of any procedures that are in place to maintain disinfection residuals.
- b) if the Subject System is an Operational Subsystem, a summary description of the Municipal Residential Drinking Water System it is a part of including the name of the Operating Authority(ies) for the other Operational Subsystems.
- c) if the Subject System is connected to one or more other Drinking Water Systems owned by different Owners, a summary description of those systems which:
 - i. indicates whether the Subject System obtains water from or supplies water to those systems,
 - ii. names the Owner and Operating Authority(ies) of those systems, and
 - iii. identifies which, if any, of those systems that the Subject System obtains water from are relied upon to ensure the provision of safe drinking water.

DO – The Operating Authority shall ensure that the description of the Drinking Water System is kept current.

What does it mean?

The purpose of Element 6 of the DWQMS is to provide a broad overview and foster a basic understanding of your drinking water system and its water source. Your drinking water system should be described including key treatment processes such as primary and secondary disinfection. Major components of your distribution system should also be described.

This description may make reference to sections Municipal Drinking Water Licence and Drinking Water Works Permit, but simply including these two documents in your operational plan **will not** satisfy the requirements of this element.

The name of the owner and operating authority should be documented. If your system is part of a larger drinking water system, the larger system must be described and the owner and operating authority should also be named. Although not required by the DWQMS, a general description of both the owner and operating authority, and the relationship between the two, can be useful and very informative.

The water source should be identified and described, including characteristics of the raw water supply and/or information regarding the system that treated water is received from.

Information regarding your raw water supply may possibly be obtained from your First Engineer's Report, and the water source should be characterized in terms of both general characteristics of the raw water supply, and common event driven fluctuations due to changes of seasons, storms, spring run-off, algae blooms, lake turnover, etc. Key operational challenges and threats should also be identified.

If water is received from another system (or systems), it is important that you identify critical upstream processes that are relied upon for the supply of safe drinking water to your system. Details regarding the agreement with these system owners and/or operating authorities should be included, including key contacts and agreement terms, where appropriate.

Finally, the DO component of Element 6 requires that you keep all of this information current.

DWQMS Elements 7– Risk Assessment

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a risk assessment process that:

- a) Considers potential hazardous events and associated hazards, as identified in the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change document titled Potential Hazardous Events for Municipal Residential Drinking Water Systems, dated December 2016 as it may be amended. A copy of this document is available at www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.
- b) identifies additional potential hazardous events and associated hazards,
- c) assesses the risks associated with the occurrence of hazardous events,
- d) ranks the hazardous events according to the associated risk,
- e) identifies control measures to address the potential hazards and hazardous events,
- f) identifies Critical Control Points,
- g) identifies a method to verify, at least once every calendar year, the currency of the information and the validity of the assumptions used in the risk assessment,
- h) ensures that the risks are assessed at least once every thirty-six months, and
- i) considers the reliability and redundancy of equipment.

DO – The Operating Authority shall perform a risk assessment consistent with the documented process.

What does it mean?

The PLAN component of Element 7 of the DWQMS requires you to document the process you will use to undertake a risk assessment for your drinking water system. This process should describe, in detail, how the risk assessment will be undertaken.

Consideration should be given to identifying:

- the scope of the assessment (defining risks that will be considered, including those that are mandatory, and identifying how additional risks may be identified/considered during the risk assessment);
- who will be involved (how the risk assessment team will be formed and who, at a minimum, will be a part of the team);

- how the risks will be documented (template, forms, etc);
- how the risks will be scored and ranked (scoring criteria);
- how control measures and critical control points will be identified;
- how reliability and redundancy of equipment will be considered;
- responsibilities and timing for verifying the currency of the information and the validity of the assumptions used in the risk assessment;
- the approval process(es) required to finalize the risk assessment, or describe how authority has been granted to the team to finalize the risk assessment;
- when key events relating to the risk assessment will take place, including forming the team, undertaking the risk assessment and communicating the results of the assessment;
- a process for considering or maintaining a list of new risks that may be identified outside of the risk assessment cycle.

A structured approach is important to ensure nothing is overlooked and that the areas of highest risk are identified. In addition to documenting the results risk assessment, you should also document all of the specific steps taken to prepare for and undertake your risk assessment. This information can provide evidence that you have undertaken the risk assessment consistent with the documented process (as required by the DO component of Element 7).

It is important to note that a risk assessment **will not be considered complete** if only the potential hazardous events and associated hazards identified by the Ministry have been considered.

DWQMS Elements 8 – Risk Assessment Outcomes

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document:

- a) the identified potential hazardous events and associated hazards,
- b) the assessed risks associated with the occurrence of hazardous events,
- c) the ranked hazardous events,
- d) the identified control measures to address the potential hazards and hazardous events,
- e) the identified Critical Control Points and their respective Critical Control Limits,
- f) procedures and/or processes to monitor the Critical Control Limits,
- g) procedures to respond to deviations from the Critical Control Limits, and
- h) procedures for reporting and recording deviations from the Critical Control Limits.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedures.

What does it mean?

Element 8 of the DWQMS requires that you document the outcome of your risk assessment. The risk assessment process may be facilitated by developing a Risk Assessment Table.

As you conduct this assessment, you will need to document the results of each step in your risk assessment procedure. At the end of your risk assessment process, all potential hazards and hazardous events should be identified, and for each, the level of risk for each assessed. The means by which you manage each of these risks should also be identified.

Completing your risk assessment process is only the first step. If you have identified strategies for reducing the likelihood or impact of risks, these will need to be implemented. You should ensure that each stage of the implementation process is documented. After implementation, the effectiveness of these strategies should be evaluated to ensure that the desired outcome has been achieved.

At a minimum, the outcomes of your risk assessment will need to be considered when you review the adequacy of the infrastructure necessary to operate and maintain your system (Element 14).

Consideration should be given to identifying, flagging or otherwise highlighting the potential hazardous events and associated hazards identified by the Ministry, to facilitate identification during an audit.

DWQMS Element 9 – Organizational Structure, Roles, Responsibilities and Authorities

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall:

- a) describe the organizational structure of the Operating Authority including respective roles, responsibilities and authorities,
- b) delineate corporate oversight roles, responsibilities and authorities in the case where the Operating Authority operates multiple Subject Systems,
- c) identify the person, persons or group of people within the management structure of the organization responsible for undertaking the Management Review described in Element 20,
- d) identify the person, persons or group of people, having Top Management responsibilities required by this Standard, along with their responsibilities, and
- e) identify the Owner of the Subject System.

DO – The Operating Authority shall keep current the description of the organizational structure including respective roles, responsibilities and authorities, and shall communicate this information to Operating Authority personnel and the Owner.

What does it mean?

Element 9 of the DWQMS requires that you describe the organizational structure of the operating authority including respective roles, responsibilities and authorities. If the operating authority operates more than one drinking water system, the operational plan must also describe corporate oversight roles, responsibilities and authorities.

The person, persons, or group of people with top management responsibilities must also be identified, as must those who are responsible for undertaking Management Reviews.

The DO component of Element 9 requires that all of the information from Element 9 is kept current and is communicated to operating authority personnel and to the owner. Consideration should be given to establishing a regular review and update schedule for this information, and a procedure for ensuring that the information is effectively communicated.

DWQMS Element 10 – Competencies

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document:

- a) competencies required for personnel performing duties directly affecting drinking water quality,
- b) activities to develop and/or maintain competencies for personnel performing duties directly affecting drinking water quality, and
- c) activities to ensure that personnel are aware of the relevance of their duties and how they affect safe drinking water.

DO – The Operating Authority shall undertake activities to:

- a) meet and maintain competencies for personnel directly affecting drinking water quality and shall maintain records of these activities, and
- b) ensure that personnel are aware of the relevance of their duties and how they affect safe drinking water, and shall maintain records of these activities.

What does it mean?

Element 10 of the DWQMS requires that you document in your operational plan, the knowledge, skills and abilities that personnel whose jobs affect drinking water quality must have, and the activities necessary to ensure that competency requirements are met and maintained.

Competencies could include technical competency (e.g., mandatory training, certification and/or knowledge of specific equipment/processes), behavioral competency (e.g., soft skills like communication and leadership), and any other specific competencies necessary for the tasks involved in the individual role (e.g., health & safety).

The DO component of Element 10 requires that you ensure that competency requirements identified in the operational plan are met and maintained. Also, you must ensure that personnel are particularly aware of the relevance and importance of their duties and how they affect the provision of safe drinking water. Consideration should be given to developing and implementing a competency assessment program that sets objective standards against which core competencies can be measured and appropriate remedial measures to be followed when gaps are identified (e.g., training).

The DO component of Element 10 also requires that you maintain records of the activities undertaken to ensure that competency requirements are met.

DWQMS Element 11 – Personnel Coverage

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure to ensure that sufficient personnel meeting identified competencies are available for duties that directly affect drinking water quality.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure.

What does it mean?

Element 11 of the DWQMS requires that you have a procedure in place to describe how enough personnel who meet the identified competencies are available for duties that directly affect drinking water quality.

Consideration should be given to specifically describing how personnel coverage is managed in times of potential staff shortage, such as an emergency situation, labour disruption, and/or peak holiday seasons.

Where contractual relationships or coverage arrangements have been established with neighboring operating authorities or system owners, the details of such arrangements should be included or referenced in your procedure.

The DO component of Element 11 requires that you ensure competent personnel are available to perform their duties. Their availability should follow your coverage plans.

DWQMS Element 12 - Communications

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for communications that describes how the relevant aspects of the Quality Management System are communicated between Top Management and:

- a) the Owner,
- b) Operating Authority personnel,
- c) Suppliers that have been identified as essential under Plan (a) of Element 13 of this Standard, and
- d) the Public.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure.

What does it mean?

Element 12 of the DWQMS requires you to have a documented procedure that describes how the QMS is communicated to others. Specifically, the procedures must address how QMS information is communicated between top management to the owner, operating authority personnel, suppliers, and the public. It is important to recognize that the procedure is required to consider communication both to and from Top Management.

Consideration should be given to developing specific strategies for communicating relevant aspects of the QMS between Top Management and essential suppliers. Where aspects of the QMS are relevant to suppliers that have not been identified as essential, consideration should also be given to including them within the scope of the communication procedure.

The procedure for communications may assist people with decision-making authority over the drinking water system in meeting their Standard of Care obligations under s.19 of the SDWA. It is important that this aspect of communications be explored and discussed during the creation, and any subsequent amendment, of the procedure.

The DO component of Element 12 requires that the operating authority implement and conform to the procedure.

DWQMS Element 13 – Essential Supplies and Services

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall:

- a) identify all supplies and services essential for the delivery of safe drinking water and shall state, for each supply or service, the means to ensure its procurement, and
- b) include a procedure by which the Operating Authority ensures the quality of essential supplies and services, in as much as they may affect drinking water quality.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure.

What does it mean?

Element 13 of the DWQMS is about managing the supplies and services that are essential for the delivery of safe drinking water. These are the people, products and materials that are required for the operation of your system.

For example, if your system uses chlorination to achieve primary and/or secondary disinfection, the chemicals you use for these processes may be an essential supply and the delivery of these chemicals may be an essential service.

Supplies and services, both goods and people coming in from outside of the drinking water system, can introduce risks. For essential supplies and services, these risks may be magnified. A failure to procure the supply / service could impact your ability to deliver safe water. If a supply or service does not meet your defined quality standards, it could result in inadequately treated or disinfected water.

By documenting what quality you expect, and by continuing to assess whether or not supplies and services consistently meet your requirements after they have been selected, you help to minimize the risks to drinking water quality.

Finally, you must make sure that your expectations for essential supplies and services are met on a continuous basis. While your suppliers are not required to be accredited against the requirements of the DWQMS, consideration should be given for requiring suppliers to meet specific certification, accreditation or licensing standards appropriate for their industry.

DWQMS Element 14 – Review and Provision of Infrastructure

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for reviewing the adequacy of the infrastructure necessary to operate and maintain the Subject System that:

- a) Considers the outcomes of the risk assessment documented under Element 8, and
- b) Ensures that the adequacy of the infrastructure necessary to operate and maintain the Subject System is reviewed at least once every Calendar Year.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure and communicate the findings of the review to the Owner.

What does it mean?

Element 14 of the DWQMS requires a procedure for the annual review of drinking water system infrastructure. The purpose is to review what infrastructure is necessary to operate and maintain the subject system, and to determine if that infrastructure is in place as needed. This review helps to ensure that adequate infrastructure is available and is part of the organization's plans.

You are required to consider the results of your risk assessment when reviewing the adequacy of your infrastructure. For example: if an infrastructure improvement, repair, or upgrade has been identified as necessary to reduce the likelihood or impact of a hazard or hazardous event, it should be included in the infrastructure review findings.

The DO component of Element 14 requires that the operating authority carry out the review procedure, and report what is found to the owner. This ensures that the owner is regularly informed of infrastructure needs so that the owner can plan accordingly.

DWQMS Element 15 – Infrastructure Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Renewal

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document:

- a) a summary of the Operating Authority's infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal programs for the Subject System, and
- b) a long term forecast of major infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal activities.

DO – The Operating Authority shall:

- a) keep the summary of the infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal programs current,
- b) ensure that the long term forecast is reviewed at least once every Calendar Year,
- c) communicate the programs to the Owner, and
- d) monitor the effectiveness of the maintenance program.

What does it mean?

Element 15 of the DWQMS is about documenting a summary of the maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal programs for your infrastructure. Your operational plan must include a summary of the programs you have in place to maintain, rehabilitate and renew the infrastructure of the drinking water system.

These summaries must be updated as changes occur, and must be communicated to the owner. It is important to note that this element of the standard only applies to the operating authority's programs and not the owner's programs.

Your operational plan should also include a long term forecast of major infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal activities. The DWQMS allows you the flexibility to define what activities are considered within this forecast and the number of years that will be forecast. In most cases, you will want to consider aligning this forecast with existing programs that the owner may have in place (e.g., asset management planning and/or long term financial forecasts).

You must also monitor the effectiveness of the maintenance program. This means that you must periodically review the maintenance program to check how well the program is working.

DWQMS Element 16 – Sampling, Testing and Monitoring

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document:

- a) a sampling, testing and monitoring procedure for process control and finished drinking water quality including requirements for sampling, testing and monitoring at the conditions most challenging to the Subject System,
- b) a description of relevant sampling, testing or monitoring activities, if any, that take place upstream of the Subject System, and
- c) a procedure that describes how sampling, testing and monitoring results are recorded and shared between the Operating Authority and the Owner, where applicable.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedures.

What does it mean?

The focus of Element 16 of the DWQMS is measuring your system to monitor what is happening, your level of control, and the quality of treated drinking water. Specifically, Element 16 requires that you establish and implement procedures describing how you sample, test and monitor for process control and finished drinking water quality.

The procedures must include details about the sampling, testing and monitoring that is performed on the conditions most challenging to your drinking water system. You must also describe relevant sampling, testing and monitoring activities that you perform upstream – before water enters your drinking water system. If this sampling, testing or monitoring is not performed by you, but is provided to you, you must also describe it. You must describe how the owner and operating authority share the sampling, testing and monitoring results.

Consideration should be given to linking your procedure to relevant regulatory requirements and requirements in your municipal drinking water licence / drinking water works permit – and establishing a process for ensuring that procedure is updated when these requirements change.

DWQMS Element 17 – Measurement and Recording Equipment Calibration and Maintenance

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for the calibration and maintenance of measurement and recording equipment.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure.

What does it mean?

Element 17 of the DWQMS deals with the equipment used to perform some of the sampling, testing and monitoring activities that you've documented in Element 16. Element 17 specifically requires that you document a procedure to calibrate and maintain this measurement and recording equipment. Verification of measuring and recording equipment may be a means for identifying that maintenance is required and in the context of the DWQMS may be considered an activity for maintaining such equipment.

The DO component of Element 17 requires that you implement and conform to the calibration and maintenance procedure.

Unless otherwise required through the regulations or a condition in the municipal drinking water licence or drinking water works permit for your system, most equipment should, at a minimum, be calibrated and/or verified at the manufacturer's recommended frequency.

To demonstrate conformance to the requirements of Element 17, you will generally be required to provide evidence that:

- you have a list of all equipment that requires calibration and/or verification;
- you have a procedure to ensure that the list remains up to date;
- you are aware of the dates / timeframes required for calibration and/or verification of each piece of equipment;
- you are aware of how the calibration and/or verification will be undertaken (e.g., calibration method, calibration performed by internal or external resource);
- you have controls in place to ensure that calibration and/or verification occurs at the required frequency; and,
- you have records that show when calibration and/or verification last took place, and these records demonstrate that the controls are adequate.

DWQMS Element 18 - Emergency Management

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure to maintain a state of emergency preparedness that includes:

- a) a list of potential emergency situations or service interruptions,
- b) processes for emergency response and recovery,
- c) emergency response training and testing requirements,
- d) Owner and Operating Authority responsibilities during emergency situations,
- e) references to municipal emergency planning measures as appropriate, and
- f) an emergency communication protocol and an up-to-date list of emergency contacts.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure.

What does it mean?

This element of the DWQMS is all about being prepared for emergency situations that could result in the loss of your ability to maintain the supply of safe drinking water to consumers. Emergency preparedness means identifying what could happen in your system to cause an emergency, and having processes and procedures in place to prepare for and respond to those emergencies.

The DWQMS requires that your operational plan includes emergency procedures and contact information, which includes information about:

- Communication, response and recovery procedures,
- Emergency response training,
- Testing your procedures to make sure they make sense,
- Responsibilities of personnel, the owner, and the operating authority,
- Municipal emergency planning measures, and
- Up-to-date lists of who to call in an emergency.

The DO component of this element requires that you implement and conform to these procedures.

CHECK Elements of the DWQMS

DWQMS Element 19 - Internal Audits

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for internal Audits that:

- a) evaluates conformity of the Quality Management System with the requirements of this Standard,
- b) identifies internal Audit criteria, frequency, scope, methodology and record-keeping requirements,
- c) considers previous internal and external Audit results, and
- d) describes how Quality Management System Corrective Actions are identified and initiated.

DO – The Operating Authority shall implement and conform to the procedure and shall ensure that internal Audits are conducted at least once every Calendar Year.

What does it mean?

Element 19 of the DWQMS requires that you have a documented procedure for conducting internal audits of your QMS, and to verify conformity of the QMS with the requirements of the DWQMS.

Specifically, the procedure must describe what you are auditing against, how often you do so, what in your QMS is being audited, how it is audited, and what records are created.

It's important to note that you may define the scope of your internal audit. While you are not required to audit all of your procedures every year, your audit procedures should clearly demonstrate how you are verifying conformity of the QMS with the requirements of the DWQMS. The audit procedures must also show how the planned audits are influenced by the previous audit results.

When something is found that does not conform to the requirements of the DWQMS, the procedure must also describe how you identify what needs to be corrected, and how the correction is initiated.

The DO component of Element 19 requires that audits be performed as described in your operational plan, and performed in entirety at least once every calendar year.

DWQMS Element 20 - Management Review

PLAN – The Operational Plan shall document a procedure for management review that evaluates the continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the Quality Management System and that includes consideration of:

- a) incidents of regulatory non-compliance,
- b) incidents of adverse drinking water tests,
- c) deviations from Critical Control Point limits and response actions,
- d) the effectiveness of the risk assessment process,
- e) internal and third-party Audit results,
- f) results of emergency response testing,
- g) operational performance,
- h) raw water supply and drinking water quality trends,
- i) follow-up on action items from previous management reviews,
- j) the status of management action items identified between reviews,
- k) changes that could affect the Quality Management System,
- l) Consumer feedback,
- m) the resources needed to maintain the Quality Management System,
- n) the results of the infrastructure review,
- o) Operational Plan currency, content and updates, and
- p) staff suggestions.

DO – Top Management shall implement and conform to the procedure and shall:

- a) ensure that a management review is conducted at least once every Calendar Year,
- b) consider the results of the management review and identify deficiencies and actions items to address the deficiencies,
- c) provide a record of any decisions and action items related to the management review including the personnel responsible for delivering the action items and the proposed timelines for their implementation, and
- d) report the results of the management review, the identified deficiencies, decisions and action items to the Owner.

What does this mean?

The PLAN component of Element 20 requires you to have a procedure for an annual management review, and lists the topics which the management review must cover. A review of these topics, which include compliance, consumer feedback, operational performance, audit information, etc., involves management in the QMS cycle.

The DO component of Element 20 requires implementation of and conformance to the procedure. It requires that reviews are undertaken at least once every calendar year, and requires that top management ensure the review is performed, deficiencies are identified, and the results are reported to the owner. Remember that as a requirement of Element 9 – Organizational Structure, Roles, Responsibilities and Authorities, the person, persons or group of people within the management structure of the organization responsible for undertaking management reviews must be identified.

Consideration should be given to developing standardized materials to support and document the outcome of the management review, such as an agenda based on the PLAN requirements of Element 20 to ensure that all the required topics are covered, and a summary of deficiencies, decisions and action items to facilitate completing tasks required in the DO requirements of Element 20.

IMPROVE Element of the DWQMS

DWQMS Element 21 – Continual Improvement

PLAN – The Operating Authority shall develop a procedure for tracking and measuring continual improvement of its Quality Management System by:

- a) reviewing and considering applicable best management practices, including any published by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and available on www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater, at least once every thirty-six months;
- b) documenting a process for identification and management of Quality Management System Corrective Actions that includes:
 - i. investigating the cause(s) of an identified non-conformity,
 - ii. documenting the action(s) that will be taken to correct the non-conformity and prevent the non-conformity from re-occurring, and
 - iii. reviewing the action(s) taken to correct the non-conformity, verifying that they are implemented and are effective in correcting and preventing the re-occurrence of the non-conformity.
- c) documenting a process for identifying and implementing Preventive Actions to eliminate the occurrence of potential non-conformities in the Quality Management System that includes:
 - i. reviewing potential non-conformities that are identified to determine if preventive actions may be necessary,
 - ii. documenting the outcome of the review, including the action(s), if any, that will be taken to prevent a non-conformity from occurring, and
 - iii. reviewing the action(s) taken to prevent a non-conformity, verifying that they are implemented and are effective in preventing the occurrence of the non-conformity.

DO – The Operating Authority shall strive to continually improve the effectiveness of its Quality Management System by implementing and conforming to the procedure.

What does this mean?

Element 21, the final element of the DWQMS, requires that you follow the QMS cycle – striving to make improvements to your QMS. Specifically, the DWQMS requires that you consider best management practices, and utilize corrective actions and preventive actions.

Corrective actions, typically identified during your internal audit or by a third-party auditor, are actions taken to fix something that isn't working. While each issue will be unique, the process you use to evaluate and correct the issue should be consistent. By ensuring that a consistent rigor is applied to the evaluation and implementation of each 'fix', you will ensure that every corrective action improves your QMS.

Preventive actions are undertaken to address potential problems that have been identified. These are issues that, if not actioned, could lead to a non-conformance. Your third-party auditor may identify these as opportunities for improvement – but preventive actions should not be limited to items identified during an audit. Items identified through staff suggestions, during management reviews, or during a routine review and update of procedures may also result in a preventive action. By ensuring that a consistent rigor is applied to the evaluation and implementation of each 'idea', you will ensure that every preventive actions taken improves your QMS.

Continual improvement is understanding what you do well, then finding ways to do it better. An improvement could reduce the cost and/or resources needed to accomplish a task, provide better tracking and reporting capabilities, better mitigate risks or hazards, or offer other benefits to your system. While reviewing best practices is required by Element 21, it is up to you to determine the scope, nature and extent of best practices that you will consider. It may be helpful to define what you would consider best practices within your organization, and evaluate their applicability to other areas. It may also be helpful to share and discuss your best practices with neighboring systems - comparing your processes and procedures to those implemented in other systems is one of the best mechanisms for identifying potential areas for improvement.

Transition to DWQMS 2.0

As part of the transition to DWQMS 2.0, you are required to:

1. Ensure that your risk assessment procedures have been updated to reflect changes to Elements 7 and 8 of the standard. All risk assessments conducted after April 6, 2017 must consider potential hazardous events and associated hazards, as identified in the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change document titled “Potential Hazardous Events for Municipal Residential Drinking Water Systems”.
2. Implement any other changes to your operational plan, policies and procedures prior to the first audit of your system that occurs in 2019.

Are you ready for DWQMS 2.0?

- Have you reviewed your operational plan to verify that references to portions of the DWQMS have been updated to reflect any administrative updates to language or numbering of the requirements?
- Have you verified that your operational plan conforms to the requirements of Element 6, and includes all of the information required for the type(s) of drinking water system included in the plan?
- Does your procedure for reviewing the adequacy of the infrastructure necessary to operate and maintain the system (Element 14) consider the outcomes of your risk assessment?
- Does your operational plan include a long term forecast of major infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal activities (Element 15)?
- Does your operational plan include a procedure or process for reviewing and considering best management practices?
- Does your operational plan include a procedure or process for identification and management of corrective actions?
- Does your operational plan include a procedure or process for identifying and implementing preventive actions?
- Have any necessary revisions to your operational been adopted / approved and implemented in accordance with any established policy or procedure in your operational plan?
- If necessary based on your operational plan, has the operational plan been re-endorsed by top management and by the owner?
- Have you contacted your accreditation body or auditor to indicate that your operational plan has been updated to conform to DWQMS 2.0?

Preparing for an External Audit

- Have you completed your internal audit, documented the results and developed an action plan for any items that were identified (including corrective and/or preventive actions)?
- Have you completed your management review, documented the results and developed a plan for any items that were identified?
- Have you provided a copy of your current operational plan, including all appendices, to your accreditation body and/or auditor?

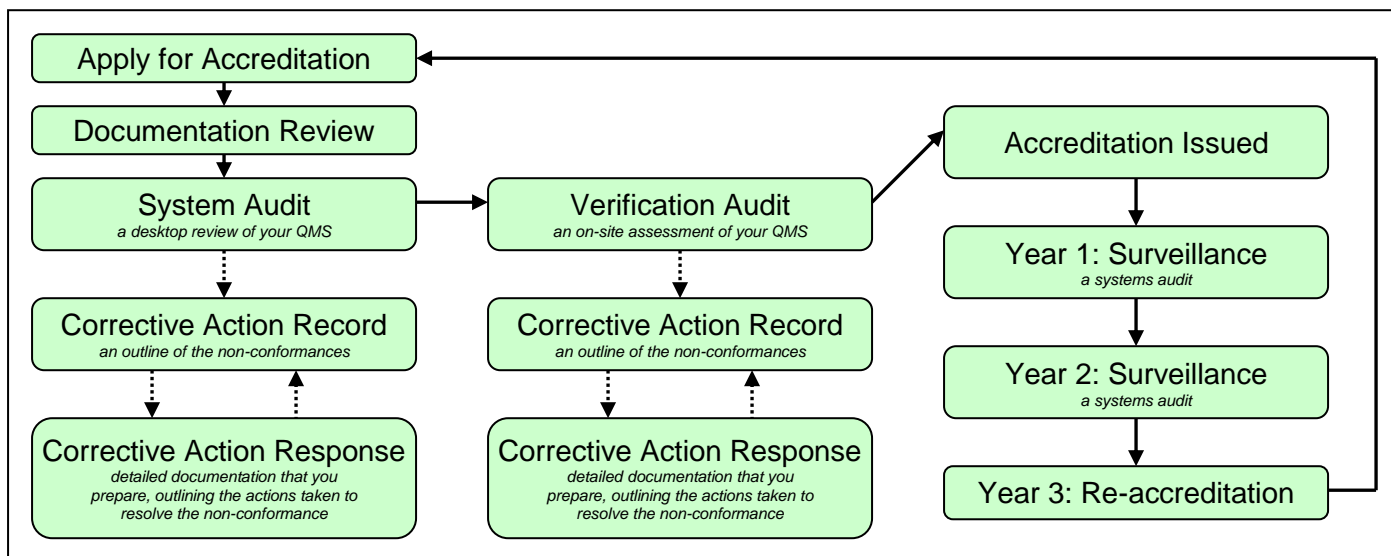
Surveillance Audit (off-site desktop review)

- Have you identified a primary contact for your auditor that will be available to answer questions and/or provide any additional information, if requested?

Re-accreditation Audit (on-site)

- Have you identified a primary contact for your auditor that will be available on-site to answer questions and/or provide any additional information, if requested?
- Have you prepared work space on-site, as necessary, for the auditor?
- Are your records readily available on-site for the auditor to review?
- Have you informed staff, as necessary, to expect the auditor and to be available to answer questions during the audit?
- Have you made arrangements to hold an opening and closing meeting with the auditor?

General Overview of the Accreditation Process



Notes
