

Complying with new or changed access rules in water sharing plans

When access rules in a water sharing plan change, licence holders are required to comply with existing licence conditions until they are notified of updated licence conditions.

Access rules for sharing water

Under the *Water Management Act 2000*, water sharing plans set rules for sharing water between the environment and other water users. These rules include ‘access rules’ which specify when licence holders can and cannot take water. Some plans also specify limits on how much water can be taken.

Access rules are implemented through conditions on access licences in the water sources to which the plan applies.

The access rules that licence holders are legally required to comply with are set out in the Statement of Conditions for their access licence.

A Statement of Conditions is first issued when an access licence is granted. A new version of the Statement of Conditions is issued if any licence conditions need to be updated.

What access rules apply to me?

Licence holders are notified and a new version of the Statement of Conditions for the access licence is provided if there are changes to access rules when a new water sharing plan commences or a plan is amended.

Until the new Statement of Conditions for the access licence has been provided licence holders must continue to comply with the access rules specified on their existing Statement of Conditions.

When will I be notified?

Issuing updated Statement of Conditions to licence holders takes time and depends on the complexity and number of rule changes as well as the number of plans commencing or amended at any one time.

For water sharing plans that commenced in 2022 and 2023, the department anticipates that licence holders will be notified of updated Statement of Conditions from February 2024.

How will I be notified?

When a Statement of Conditions is updated, a hard copy is sent to the holders of the access licence using the postal addresses held by WaterNSW.

To check contact details are up to date, visit WaterNSW.

Complying with access rules

You must comply with all the licence conditions in your Statement of Conditions every time you take water.

It is an offence under the Act if you do not comply with any term or condition of your access licence, as set out in your Statement of Conditions, when taking water. Consequences for not complying with access licence terms and conditions could include being fined, you may be directed to stop, or you could be prosecuted.

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) ensures water is used lawfully in NSW. In addition to responding to and investigating reports of alleged water law breaches, compliance officers across NSW actively monitor and audit the use of surface water and groundwater.

To make a confidential report of any suspected unauthorised activities, contact NRAR:

- on 1800 633 362 during business hours or
- via email nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au