

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLIC HEALTH FEES

DRINKING WATER/WELLS/CROSS CONNECTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (EH), is proposing changes to the Los Angeles County Code, Title 8 – Consumer Protection, Business, and Wage Regulations; Division 1 – Public Health Licenses. These changes impact permit, plan check, and service fees that are collected under the authority of State and County Codes to carry out duties that protect public health and safety.

Overview of Programs

EH Drinking Water Program works to prevent the spread of infectious disease and other contaminants by protecting clean water from accidental contamination that can occur during pressure drops in water systems. This protection is achieved through the regulation of wells, state small water systems and safeguarding potable water from back-siphonage.

In July 2024, EH returned the Los Angeles Local Primacy Agency program to the State Water Resources Control Board. As a result, all permit fees for small water systems with 15–200 service connections will be removed from Title 8. EH will continue to permit and regulate state small water systems with 5–14 service connections that serve fewer than 25 people on a daily basis.

EH also reviews and issue permits for the construction and destruction of monitoring wells, water production wells, and exploratory holes.

EH is responsible for inspecting industrial, commercial, and medical facilities to ensure that backflow prevention assemblies are installed to prevent unsafe plumbing arrangements or backflow conditions. The assembly must be tested annually by a certified tester. The Drinking Water Program certifies over 300 backflow prevention device testers and maintains a database of over 51,000 backflow assembly testers.

Why are the fees changing now?

Fees were last increased in 2018. While fees have remained the same, operational costs have increased annually due to negotiated employee salaries and benefits, along with inflation. From FY 19/20 through FY 25/26, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by about 25%, and cost-of-living increases approved for County workers totaled 20.5%. Yet fees have remained at 2018 levels despite these cost increases.

A comprehensive fee study was conducted along with an evaluation of current operational costs and the fee levels required to cover those costs. The study reviewed direct and indirect costs associated with program administration, inspection, oversight and enforcement. The fee analysis structure was validated by the LA County Auditor-Controller. The last comprehensive fee study for EH programs was conducted in 2011.

What are the fee changes?

A summary of the proposed fees is listed below. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, fees will go into effect starting December 15, 2026.

To minimize the impact of future increases, starting in FY 27/28, fees will be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with no fee exceeding the reasonable cost of providing services.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROGRAM FEES

PERMIT TYPES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM: State Small water system is piped water system with 5 to 14 service connections (homes) serving fewer than 25 people daily.	\$971	\$1,120
BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE (EACH): Device installed in a water system that stops contaminated water from flowing backward into the drinking water system	\$37	\$43

PLAN CHECK FEES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM - WATER SUPPLY PERMIT REVIEW: Evaluation of permit applications for state small water systems, to verify water system meets regulatory requirements	\$1,194	\$2,036
WELL CONSTRUCTION (PRODUCTION/CATHODIC): Evaluation of plans for drilling and installing a well, including casing, seals, and related components, to ensure protection from contamination	\$970	\$1,674
WELL DESTRUCTION/RENOVATION (PRODUCTION/CATHODIC): The proper sealing and permanent closure or renovation of a well to prevent groundwater contamination and eliminate it as a potential pathway for pollutants	\$1,268	\$1,287
WELL CONSTRUCTION/DESTRUCTION 1-10 WELLS (MONITORING & GEOTHERMAL): Installation or permanent closure of wells, including drilling, casing, sealing, or properly filling and sealing an inactive well to protect groundwater and prevent contamination	\$735	\$1,230
WELL CONSTRUCTION/DESTRUCTION 11-24 WELLS (MONITORING & GEOTHERMAL)	\$825	\$1,284
WELL CONSTRUCTION/DESTRUCTION 25+ WELLS (MONITORING & GEOTHERMAL)	\$1,666	\$1,388
WELLS - EXPLORATORY SOIL BORINGS 1-4 BORINGS:	\$126	\$471



Evaluation of drilling 1-4 holes into the ground to collect soil samples and evaluate subsurface conditions, including soil composition, stratigraphy, and groundwater presence		
WELLS - EXPLORATORY SOIL BORINGS 5+ BORINGS:	\$406	\$1,086
WATER SUPPLY WELL YIELD TEST: Assessment of a water source's capacity to produce water over a specified period, verifying the supply can meet the system's demand and regulatory requirements	\$2,152	\$2,183
WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM EVALUATION: Evaluation of water treatment systems design, operation, and performance, to verify that it effectively removes contaminants and delivers safe drinking water	\$519	\$985

SERVICE FEES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM - NOV: Notice of Violation for microbiological contamination in a small water system	\$299	\$515
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM - COMPLIANCE REVIEW: Compliance review to evaluate recurring violations of applicable drinking water regulations	\$373	\$704
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM - CITATION: Citation for chemical contamination in a Small Water System	\$597	\$781
WELL APPLICATION CANCELLATION	\$75	\$108
CERTIFIED BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICE TESTER: This is an exam proctored by Public Health to certify professionals authorized to test and certify backflow prevention devices to protect public water systems from contamination	\$340	\$743



FEE COMPARSION BY COUNTY

The proposed fees are consistent with those of comparable jurisdictions when accounting for differences in scale and scope. Given Los Angeles County's large population and extensive inspection and service responsibilities, the proposed fees are appropriately aligned with comparable jurisdictions.

PERMIT FEES	LOS ANGELES PROPOSED NEW FEE	PASADENA	LONG BEACH	ORANGE	VENTURA	SAN DIEGO	RIVERSIDE	SAN BERNARDINO
STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEM	\$1,120	N/A	N/A	\$1,049	\$1,013	\$1,745	\$1,141	\$968
WELL CONSTRUCTION (PRODUCTION/CATHODIC)	\$1,674	\$345	\$854	\$1,799	N/A	\$1,751	\$398-\$1,194	\$501-\$772

Visit our website to learn more about the [Drinking Water Program](#).

How to provide feedback

Questions and comments can be submitted to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EHfees> or scan the QR code.

