

455B.173 Duties.

The commission shall:

1. Develop comprehensive plans and programs for the prevention, control and abatement of water pollution.

2. Establish, modify, or repeal water quality standards, pretreatment standards, and effluent standards in accordance with the provisions of [this chapter](#).

a. The effluent standards may provide for maintaining the existing quality of the water of the state that is a navigable water of the United States under the federal Water Pollution Control Act where the quality thereof exceeds the requirements of the water quality standards.

b. If the federal environmental protection agency has promulgated an effluent standard or pretreatment standard pursuant to section 301, 306, or 307 of the federal Water Pollution Control Act, a pretreatment or effluent standard adopted pursuant to [this section](#) shall not be more stringent than the federal effluent or pretreatment standard for such source. [This section](#) may not preclude the establishment of a more restrictive effluent limitation in the permit for a particular point source if the more restrictive effluent limitation is necessary to meet water quality standards, the establishment of an effluent standard for a source or class of sources for which the federal environmental protection agency has not promulgated standards pursuant to section 301, 306, or 307 of the federal Water Pollution Control Act. Except as required by federal law or regulation, the commission shall not adopt an effluent standard more stringent with respect to any pollutant than is necessary to reduce the concentration of that pollutant in the effluent to the level due to natural causes, including the mineral and chemical characteristics of the land, existing in the water of the state to which the effluent is discharged. Notwithstanding any other provision of [this part 1 of subchapter III](#) or [chapter 459, subchapter III](#), any new source, the construction of which was commenced after October 18, 1972, and which was constructed as to meet all applicable standards of performance for the new source or any more stringent effluent limitation required to meet water quality standards, shall not be subject to any more stringent effluent limitations during a ten-year period beginning on the date of completion of construction or during the period of depreciation or amortization of the pollution control equipment for the facility for the purposes of section 167 or 169 or both sections of the Internal Revenue Code, whichever period ends first.

c. Rules adopted to implement [this subsection](#) are not subject to [section 17A.7, subsection 2 or 3](#).

3. Establish, modify, or repeal rules relating to the location, construction, operation, and maintenance of disposal systems and public water supply systems and specifying the conditions, including the viability of a system pursuant to [section 455B.174](#), under which the director shall issue, revoke, suspend, modify, or deny permits for the operation, installation, construction, addition to, or modification of any disposal system or public water supply system, or for the discharge of any pollutant.

a. No rules shall be adopted which regulate the hiring or firing of operators of disposal systems or public water supply systems except rules which regulate the certification of operators as to their technical competency.

b. A publicly owned treatment works whose discharge meets the final effluent limitations which were contained in its discharge permit on the date that construction of the publicly owned treatment works was approved by the department shall not be required to meet more stringent effluent limitations for a period of ten years from the date the construction was completed and accepted but not longer than twelve years from the date that construction was approved by the department.

4. Cooperate with other state or interstate water pollution control agencies in establishing standards, objectives, or criteria for the quality of interstate waters originating or flowing through this state.

5. Establish, modify, or repeal rules relating to drinking water standards for public water supply systems. Such standards shall specify maximum contaminant levels or treatment techniques necessary to protect the public health and welfare. The drinking water standards

must assure compliance with federal drinking water standards adopted pursuant to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

6. Adopt rules relating to inspection, monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements for the owner or operator of any public water supply or any disposal system or of any source which is an industrial user of a publicly or privately owned disposal system.

7. Adopt a statewide plan for the provision of safe drinking water under emergency circumstances. All public agencies, as defined in [chapter 28E](#), shall cooperate in the development and implementation of the plan. The plan shall detail the manner in which the various state and local agencies shall participate in the response to an emergency. The department may enter into any agreement, subject to approval of the commission, with any state agency or unit of local government or with the federal government which may be necessary to establish the role of such agencies in regard to the plan. This plan shall be coordinated with disaster emergency plans.

8. Formulate and adopt specific and detailed statewide standards pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) for review of plans and specifications and the construction of sewer systems and water supply distribution systems and extensions to such systems not later than October 1, 1977. The standards shall be based on criteria contained in the “Recommended Standards for Sewage Works” and “Recommended Standards for Water Works” (Ten States Standards) as adopted by the Great Lakes – Upper Mississippi River board of state sanitary engineers, design manuals published by the department, applicable federal guidelines and standards, standard textbooks, current technical literature, and applicable safety standards. The rules adopted which directly pertain to the construction of sewer systems and water supply distribution systems and the review of plans and specifications for such construction shall be known respectively as the “Iowa Standards for Sewer Systems” and the “Iowa Standards for Water Supply Distribution Systems” and shall be applicable in each governmental subdivision of the state. Exceptions shall be made to the standards so formulated only upon special request to and receipt of permission from the department. The department shall publish the standards and make copies of such standards available to governmental subdivisions and to the public.

9. Adopt, modify, or repeal rules relating to the construction and reconstruction of water wells, the proper abandonment of wells, and the registration or certification of water well contractors. The rules shall include those necessary to protect the public health and welfare, and to protect the waters of the state. The rules may include, but are not limited to, establishing fees for registration or certification of water well contractors, requiring the submission of well driller’s logs, formation samples or well cuttings, water samples, information on test pumping and requiring inspections. Fees shall be based upon the reasonable cost of conducting the water well contractor registration or certification program.

10. Adopt, modify, or repeal rules relating to the business plan which disposal systems and public water supply systems must file with the department pursuant to [section 455B.174](#), and adopt, modify, or repeal rules establishing a methodology and timetable by which nonviable systems shall take action to become viable or make alternative arrangements in providing treatment or water supply services.

11. Adopt rules for the issuance of a single general permit, after notice and opportunity for a public hearing. The single general permit shall cover numerous facilities to the extent that they are representative of a class of facilities which can be identified and conditioned by a single permit.

12. Adopt, modify, or repeal rules relating to the construction or operation of animal feeding operations, as provided in sections relating to animal feeding operations provided in [chapter 459, subchapter III](#).

[C97, §2565; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §2220; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, §136.3(2,c); C66, 71, §136.3(2,c), 455B.9; C73, 75, §455B.32, 455B.65; C77, 79, 81, §455B.32; [82 Acts, ch 1199, §10, 96](#)]

C83, §455B.173

[83 Acts, ch 136, §2](#); [85 Acts, ch 176, §3](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §1899A](#); [87 Acts, ch 225, §114](#); [89 Acts, ch 125, §1](#); [90 Acts, ch 1255, §23](#); [91 Acts, ch 224, §5](#); [92 Acts, ch 1041, §2, 3](#); [95 Acts, ch 61, §1](#); [95 Acts, ch 195, §21, 22](#); [98 Acts, ch 1209, §23, 53](#); [99 Acts, ch 45, §1](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1058, §43](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1086, §106](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1167, §12](#); [2006 Acts, ch 1014, §2](#); [2006](#)

Acts, ch 1145, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 25, §102; 2014 Acts, ch 1010, §7; 2021 Acts, ch 76, §87; 2024 Acts, ch 1169, §17

Referred to in §331.382, 455B.174, 455B.176A, 455B.183, 455B.188, 455B.474