

**567—61.2(455B) General considerations.**

**61.2(1) Policy statement.** It shall be the policy of the commission to protect and enhance the quality of all the waters of the state. In the furtherance of this policy it will attempt to prevent and abate the pollution of all waters to the fullest extent possible consistent with statutory and technological limitations. This policy shall apply to all point and nonpoint sources of pollution.

These water quality standards establish selected criteria for certain present and future designated uses of the surface waters of the state. The standards establish the areas where these uses are to be protected and provide minimum criteria for waterways having nondesignated uses as well. Many surface waters are designated for more than one use. In these cases the more stringent criteria shall govern for each parameter.

Certain of the criteria are in narrative form without numeric limitations. In applying such narrative standards, decisions will be based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's methodology described in "Guidelines for Deriving Numerical National Water Quality Criteria for the Protection of Aquatic Organisms and Their Uses," (1985) and on the rationale contained in "Quality Criteria for Water," published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1977), as updated by supplemental Section 304 (of the Act) Ambient Water Quality Criteria documents. To provide human health criteria for parameters not having numerical values listed in 61.3(3) Table 1, the required criteria will be based on the rationale contained in these EPA criteria documents. The human health criterion considered will be the value associated with the consumption of fish flesh and a risk factor of  $10^{-5}$  for carcinogenic parameters. For noncarcinogenic parameters, the recommended EPA criterion will be selected. For Class C water, the EPA criteria for fish and water consumption will be selected using the same considerations for carcinogenic and noncarcinogenic parameters as noted above.

All methods of sample collection, preservation, and analysis used in applying any of the rules in these standards shall be in accord with those prescribed in 567—Chapter 63.

**61.2(2) Antidegradation policy.** It is the policy of the state of Iowa that:

a. Tier 1 protection. Existing surface water uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect the existing uses will be maintained and protected.

b. Tier 2 protection. Where the quality of the waters exceeds levels necessary to support propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water, that quality shall be maintained and protected unless the department finds, after full satisfaction of the intergovernmental coordination and public participation provisions, that allowing lower water quality is necessary to accommodate important economic or social development in the area in which the waters are located. In allowing such degradation or lower water quality, the department shall ensure water quality adequate to protect existing uses fully. Further, the department shall ensure the highest statutory and regulatory requirements for all new and existing point sources and all cost-effective and reasonable best management practices for nonpoint source control before allowing any lowering of water quality.

c. Tier 2½ protection—outstanding Iowa waters. Where high quality waters constitute an outstanding state resource, such as waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance, that water quality shall be maintained and protected.

d. Tier 3 protection—outstanding national resource waters. Where high quality waters constitute an outstanding national resource, such as waters of national and state parks and wildlife refuges and waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance, that water quality shall be maintained and protected. Any proposed activity that would result in a permanent new or expanded source of pollutants in an outstanding national resource water is prohibited.

e. Rescinded IAB 8/31/16, effective 8/12/16.

f. All unapproved facility plans for new or expanded construction permits, except for construction permits issued for nondischarging facilities, shall undergo an antidegradation review if degradation is likely in the receiving water or downstream waters following February 17, 2010.

g. This policy shall be applied in conjunction with water quality certification review pursuant to Section 401 of the Act. In the event that activities are specifically exempted from flood plain development permits or any other permits issued by this department in 567—Chapters 70, 71, and 72, the activity will be considered consistent with this policy. Other activities not otherwise exempted will be subject to 567—Chapters 70, 71, and 72 and this policy.

**61.2(3) *Minimum treatment required.*** All wastes discharged to the waters of the state must be of such quality that the discharge will not cause the narrative or numeric criteria limitations to be exceeded. Where the receiving waters provide sufficient assimilative capacity that the water quality standards are not the limiting factor, all point source wastes shall receive treatment in compliance with minimum effluent standards as adopted in rules by the department.

There are numerous parameters of water quality associated with nonpoint source runoff which are of significance to the designated water uses specified in the general and specific designations in 567—61.3(455B), but which are not delineated. It shall be the intent of these standards that the limits on such nonpoint source related parameters when adopted shall be those that can be achieved by best management practices as defined in the course of the continuing planning process from time to time. Existing water quality and nonpoint source runoff control technology will be evaluated in the course of the Iowa continuing planning process, and best management practices and limitations on specific water quality parameters will be reviewed and revised from time to time to ensure that the designated water uses and water quality enhancement goals are met.

**61.2(4) *Regulatory mixing zones.*** Mixing zones are recognized as being necessary for the initial assimilation of point source discharges which have received the required degree of treatment or control. Mixing zones shall not be used for, or considered as, a substitute for minimum treatment technology required by subrule 61.2(3). The objective of establishing mixing zones is to provide a means of control over the placement and emission of point source discharges so as to minimize environmental impacts. Waters within a mixing zone shall meet the general water quality criteria of subrule 61.3(2). Waters at and beyond mixing zone boundaries shall meet all applicable standards and the chronic and human health criteria of subrule 61.3(3), Tables 1 and 3, for that particular water body or segment. A zone of initial dilution may be established within the mixing zone beyond which the applicable standards and the acute criteria of subrule 61.3(3) will be met. For waters designated under subrule 61.3(5), any parameter not included in Tables 1, 2 and 3 of subrule 61.3(3), the chronic and human health criteria, and the acute criterion calculated following subrule 61.2(1), will be met at the mixing zone and zone of initial dilution boundaries, respectively.

*a.* Due to extreme variations in wastewater and receiving water characteristics, spatial dimensions of mixing zones shall be defined on a site-specific basis. These rules are not intended to define each individual mixing zone, but will set maximum limits which will satisfy most biological, chemical, physical and radiological considerations in defining a particular mixing zone. Additional details are noted in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020, for considering unusual site-specific features such as side channels and sand bars which may influence a mixing zone. Applications for operation permits under 567—subrule 64.3(1) may be required to provide specific information related to the mixing zone characteristics below their outfall so that mixing zone boundaries can be determined.

*b.* For parameters included in Table 1 only (which does not include ammonia nitrogen), the dimensions of the mixing zone and the zone of initial dilution will be calculated using a mathematical model presented in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020, or from instream studies of the mixing characteristics during low flow. In addition, the most restrictive of the following factors will be met:

(1) The stream flow in the mixing zone may not exceed the most restrictive of the following:

1. Twenty-five percent of the design low stream flows noted in subrule 61.2(5) for interior streams and rivers, and the Big Sioux and Des Moines Rivers.

2. Ten percent of the design low stream flows noted in subrule 61.2(5) for the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

3. The stream flow contained in the mixing zone at the most restrictive of the applicable mixing zone length criteria, noted below.

(2) The length of the mixing zone below the point of discharge shall be set by the most restrictive of the following:

1. The distance to the juncture of two perennial streams.

2. The distance to a public water supply intake.

3. The distance to the upstream limits of an established recreational area, such as public beaches, and state, county and local parks.

4. The distance to the middle of a crossover point in a stream where the main current flows from one bank across to the opposite bank.

5. The distance to another mixing zone.

6. Not to exceed a distance of 2000 feet.

7. The location where the mixing zone contained the percentages of stream flow noted in 61.2(4)“b”(1).

(3) The width of the mixing zone is calculated as the portion of the stream containing the allowed mixing zone stream flow. The mixing zone width will be measured perpendicular to the basic direction of stream flow at the downstream boundary of the mixing zone. This measurement will only consider the distance of continuous water surface.

(4) The width and length of the zone of initial dilution may not exceed 10 percent of the width and length of the mixing zone.

c. The stream flow used in determining wasteload allocations to ensure compliance with the maximum contaminant level (MCL), chronic and human health criteria of Table 1 will be that value contained at the boundary of the allowed mixing zone. This stream flow may not exceed the following percentages of the design low stream flow as measured at the point of discharge:

(1) Twenty-five percent for interior streams and rivers, and the Big Sioux and Des Moines Rivers.

(2) Ten percent for the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

The stream flow in the zone of initial dilution used in determining effluent limits to ensure compliance with the acute criteria of Table 1 may not exceed 10 percent of the calculated flow associated with the mixing zone.

d. For toxic parameters noted in Table 1, the following exceptions apply to the mixing zone requirements:

(1) No mixing zone or zone of initial dilution will be allowed for waters designated as lakes or wetlands.

(2) No zone of initial dilution will be allowed in waters designated as cold water.

(3) The use of a diffuser device to promote rapid mixing of an effluent in a receiving stream will be considered on a case-by-case basis with its usage as a means for dischargers to comply with an acute numerical criterion.

(4) A discharger to interior streams and rivers, the Big Sioux and Des Moines Rivers, and the Mississippi or Missouri Rivers may provide to the department, for consideration, instream data which technically supports the allowance of an increased percentage of the stream flow contained in the mixing zone due to rapid and complete mixing. Any allowed increase in mixing zone flow would still be governed by the mixing zone length restrictions. The submission of data should follow the guidance provided in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020.

e. For ammonia criteria noted in Table 3, the dimensions of the mixing zone and the zone of initial dilution will be calculated using a mathematical model presented in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020, or from instream studies of the mixing characteristics during low flow. In addition, the most restrictive of the following factors will be met:

(1) The stream flow in the mixing zone may not exceed the most restrictive of the following:

1. One hundred percent of the design low stream flows noted in subrule 61.2(5) for locations where the dilution ratio is less than or equal to 2:1.

2. Fifty percent of the design low stream flows noted in subrule 61.2(5) for locations where the dilution ratio is greater than 2:1, but less than or equal to 5:1.

3. Twenty-five percent of the design low stream flows noted in subrule 61.2(5) for locations where the dilution ratio is greater than 5:1.

4. The stream flow contained in the mixing zone at the most restrictive of the applicable mixing zone length criteria, noted below.

(2) The length of the mixing zone below the point of discharge shall be set by the most restrictive of the following:

1. The distance to the juncture of two perennial streams.
2. The distance to a public water supply intake.
3. The distance to the upstream limits of an established recreational area, such as public beaches, and state, county, and local parks.
4. The distance to the middle of a crossover point in a stream where the main current flows from one bank across to the opposite bank.
5. The distance to another mixing zone.
6. Not to exceed a distance of 2000 feet.
7. The location where the mixing zone contained the percentages of stream flow noted in 61.2(4)“e”(1).

(3) The width of the mixing zone is calculated as the portion of the stream containing the allowed mixing zone stream flow. The mixing zone width will be measured perpendicular to the basic direction of stream flow at the downstream boundary of the mixing zone. This measurement will only consider the distance of continuous water surface.

(4) The width and length of the zone of initial dilution may not exceed 10 percent of the width and length of the mixing zone.

*f.* For ammonia criteria noted in Table 3, the stream flow used in determining wasteload allocations to ensure compliance with the chronic criteria of Table 3 will be that value contained at the boundary of the allowed mixing zone. This stream flow may not exceed the percentages of the design low stream flow noted in 61.2(4)“e”(1) as measured at the point of discharge.

The pH and temperature values at the boundary of the mixing zone used to select the chronic ammonia criteria of Table 3 will be from one of the following sources. The source of the pH and temperature data will follow the sequence listed below, if applicable data exists from the source.

(1) Specific pH and temperature data provided by the applicant gathered at their mixing zone boundary. Procedures for obtaining this data are noted in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020.

(2) Regional background pH and temperature data provided by the applicant gathered along the receiving stream and representative of the background conditions at the outfall. Procedures for obtaining this data are noted in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020.

(3) The statewide median background values as determined by the department.

The stream flow in the zone of initial dilution used in determining effluent limits to ensure compliance with the acute criteria of Table 3 may not exceed 5 percent of the calculated flow associated with the mixing zone for facilities with a dilution ratio of less than or equal to 2:1, and not exceed 10 percent of the calculated flow associated with the mixing zone for facilities with a dilution ratio of greater than 2:1. The pH and temperature values at the boundary of the zone of initial dilution used to select the acute ammonia criteria of Table 3 will be from one of the following sources and follow the sequence listed below, if applicable data exists from the source.

1. Specific effluent pH and temperature data if the dilution ratio is less than or equal to 2:1.

2. If the dilution ratio is greater than 2:1, the logarithmic average pH of the effluent and the regional or statewide pH provided in 61.2(4)“f” will be used. In addition, the flow proportioned average temperature of the effluent and the regional or statewide temperature provided in 61.2(4)“f” will be used. The procedures for calculating these data are noted in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020.

*g.* For ammonia criteria noted in Table 3, the following exceptions apply to the mixing zone requirements.

(1) No mixing zone or zone of initial dilution will be allowed for waters designated as lakes or wetlands.

(2) No zone of initial dilution will be allowed in waters designated as cold water.

(3) The use of a diffuser device to promote rapid mixing of an effluent in a receiving stream will be considered on a case-by-case basis with its usage as a means for dischargers to comply with an acute numerical criterion.

(4) A discharger to interior streams and rivers, the Big Sioux and Des Moines Rivers, and the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers may provide to the department, for consideration, instream data which technically supports the allowance of an increased percentage of the stream flow contained in the mixing zone due to rapid and complete mixing. Any allowed increase in mixing zone flow would still be governed by the mixing zone length restrictions. The submission of data should follow the guidance provided in the “Iowa Wasteload Allocation (WLA) Procedure,” as revised on November 11, 2020.

*h.* Temperature changes within mixing zones established for heat dissipation will not exceed the temperature criteria in 61.3(3)“b”(5).

*i.* The appropriateness of establishing a mixing zone where a substance discharged is bioaccumulative, persistent, carcinogenic, mutagenic, or teratogenic will be carefully evaluated. In such cases, effects such as potential groundwater contamination, sediment deposition, fish attraction, bioaccumulation in aquatic life, bioconcentration in the food chain, and known or predicted safe exposure levels shall be considered.

**61.2(5) Implementation strategy.** Numerical criteria specified in these water quality standards shall be met when the flow of the receiving stream equals or exceeds the design low flows noted below.

Type of Numerical Criteria	Design Low Flow Regime
Aquatic Life Protection (TOXICS)	
Acute	1Q <sub>10</sub>
Chronic	7Q <sub>10</sub>
Aquatic Life Protection (AMMONIA - N)	
Acute	1Q <sub>10</sub>
Chronic	30Q <sub>10</sub>
Human Health Protection & MCL	
Noncarcinogenic	30Q <sub>5</sub>
Carcinogenic	Harmonic mean

*a.* The allowable 3°C temperature increase criterion for warm water interior streams, 61.3(3)“b”(5) “1,” is based in part on the need to protect fish from cold shock due to rapid cessation of heat source and resultant return of the receiving stream temperature to natural background temperature. On low flow streams, in winter, during certain conditions of relatively cold background stream temperature and relatively warm ambient air and groundwater temperature, certain wastewater treatment plants with relatively constant flow and constant temperature discharges will cause temperature increases in the receiving stream greater than allowed in 61.3(3)“b”(5)“1.”

*b.* During the period November 1 to March 31, for the purpose of applying the 3°C temperature increase criterion, the minimum protected receiving stream flow rate below such discharges may be increased to not more than three times the rate of flow of the discharge, where there is reasonable assurance that the discharge is of such constant temperature and flow rate and continuous duration as to not constitute a threat of heat cessation and not cause the receiving stream temperature to vary more than 3°C per day.

*c.* Site-specific water quality criteria may be allowed in lieu of the specific numerical criteria listed in Tables 1 and 3 of this chapter if adequate documentation is provided to show that the proposed criteria will protect all existing or potential uses of the surface water. Site-specific water quality criteria may be appropriate where:

- (1) The types of organisms differ significantly from those used in setting the statewide criteria; or
- (2) The chemical characteristics of the surface water such as pH, temperature, and hardness differ significantly from the characteristics used in setting the statewide criteria.

Development of site-specific criteria shall include an evaluation of the chemical and biological characteristics of the water resource and an evaluation of the impact of the discharge. All evaluations for site-specific criteria modification must be coordinated through the department, and be conducted using scientifically accepted procedures approved by the department. Any site-specific criterion developed under the provisions of this subrule is subject to the review and approval of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. All criteria approved under the provisions of this subrule will be published periodically by the

department. Guidelines for establishing site-specific water quality criteria can be found in “Water Quality Standards Handbook,” published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, December 1983.

*d.* A wastewater treatment facility may submit to the department technically valid instream data which provides additional information to be used in the calculations of their wasteload allocations and effluent limitations. This information would be in association with the low flow characteristics, width, length and time of travel associated with the mixing zone or decay rates of various effluent parameters. The wasteload allocation will be calculated considering the applicable data and consistent with the provisions and restrictions in the rules.

*e.* The department may perform use assessment and related use attainability analyses on water bodies where uses may not be known or adequately documented. The preparation of use attainability analysis documents will consider available U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance or other applicable guidance. Credible data and documentation will be used to assist in the preparation of use assessments and use attainability analysis reports.

**61.2(6)** *State water quality certification.* This subrule describes the procedures the department will follow when processing certification requests for state water quality certification (certification) of federally issued licenses and permits pursuant to Section 401 of the Act, including but not limited to permits issued by the United States Corps of Engineers (Corps) pursuant to Section 404 of the Act.

*a.* General. The department shall receive, consider, and process certification requests in accordance with Section 401 of the Act.

*b.* Certification requests. Certification requests shall be made on the department’s Section 401 Water Quality Certification Request form. This form is available on the department’s website. Individual permits or licenses issued by federal agencies require submission of a pre-filing meeting request and certification request to obtain certification. The pre-filing meeting request must be submitted to the department at least 30 days prior to submitting the certification request.

*c.* Public notice. The department shall issue a public notice of a certification request. The public notice may be a joint public notice issued by a federal agency on behalf of the department. When there is no joint public notice issued by the federal agency, a public notice issued by the department will be provided on its website. The public notice shall solicit comments from the public regarding whether the proposed project complies with state water quality requirements in accordance with Section 401 of the Act. The public notice shall specify the procedure and time frame for submitting comments on the proposed project.

*d.* Public notice for new or renewed nationwide or regional permits. The department shall provide additional notice to the public of certification of new or renewed nationwide or regional permits issued by the Corps pursuant to Section 404 of the Act. The department shall provide such notice on its website. The public notice shall solicit comments from the public regarding whether the proposed permit complies with state water quality requirements in accordance with Section 401 of the Act. The public notice shall specify the procedure and time frame for submitting comments on the proposed certification.

*e.* Department action on certification request. After the close of the public comment period and consideration of comments received, the department may issue a certification letter which may include conditions necessary to ensure compliance with state water quality requirements, waive issuance of the certification, or deny certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Act.

*f.* Certification of federal permits or licenses may require conditions, which may include one or more of the following, to ensure water quality requirements are met:

(1) During construction and upon completion of the project, actions must be taken to prevent pollution affecting public health, fish, shellfish, wildlife, and recreation due to turbidity, pH, nutrients, suspended solids, floating debris, visible oil and grease, or other pollutants entering waters of the state;

(2) Equipment used in waters of the state shall be cleaned of all hazardous materials, pesticides, fuels, lubricants, oils, hydraulic fluids, or other construction-related, potentially hazardous substances before arriving on site. Wash water shall not be discharged into a water of the state;

(3) All cleared vegetative material shall be properly managed in such a manner that it cannot enter a water of the state and cause a violation of water quality requirements;

(4) All construction debris shall be properly managed in such a manner that it cannot enter a water of the state;

(5) Erosion shall be managed so that sediment is not discharged to a water of the state in a manner that causes a violation of water quality requirements;

(6) Riprap, treated lumber products, and temporary structures shall consist of clean material free of coatings of potentially hazardous substances. No asphalt or petroleum-based material shall be used as or included in material placed in any water of the state or within the high-water table;

(7) Stockpiled dredged materials on the shore shall be managed so that sediment is not discharged in a manner that causes a violation of water quality requirements;

(8) Water quality monitoring will be required for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower projects at the baseline, construction and operational phases of the project;

(9) Hydraulically dredged material shall be managed to ensure the return water meets water quality requirements.

g. Duration of certification. The department's certification shall remain in effect until the expiration date of the applicable permit or license.

[**ARC 8214B**, IAB 10/7/09, effective 11/11/09; **ARC 8466B**, IAB 1/13/10, effective 2/17/10; **ARC 9330B**, IAB 1/12/11, effective 2/16/11 (See Delay note at the end of chapter); **ARC 0121C**, IAB 5/16/12, effective 6/20/12; **ARC 1495C**, IAB 6/11/14, effective 7/16/14; **ARC 2695C**, IAB 8/31/16, effective 8/12/16; **ARC 3583C**, IAB 1/17/18, effective 2/21/18; **ARC 5226C**, IAB 10/7/20, effective 11/11/20; **ARC 5679C**, IAB 6/16/21, effective 7/21/21]