



# RV Parks: Am I Regulated?

## Who Should Use This Guide?

This guide is intended to inform owners of recreational-vehicle parks that some of their activities may be regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. This publication is not a substitute for the rules. You can download the TCEQ's rules at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/rules](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules)>. In addition to the TCEQ, local governments and other state and federal agencies may have rules that apply.

## Is My RV Park Regulated by the TCEQ?

If you own or manage an RV park in Texas, you may be regulated by the TCEQ if you:

- supply water for drinking, hand washing, dish washing, cooking, or bathing
- treat or dispose of wastewater
- dispose of waste
- disturb 1 acre or more of land during construction

## Am I a Public Water System?

If you supply water for drinking, hand washing, dish washing, cooking, or bathing to 15 connections or more or 25 people or more, for at least 60 days out of the year, then you may meet the TCEQ's definition of a "public water system" and need to comply with the TCEQ's regulations. You may meet the definition of a public water system if you supply drinking water from a well or other sources—such as springs or lakes—or from another water provider.

## How Can I Comply with the TCEQ's Rules for Public Water Systems?

The TCEQ's regulations are put in place to ensure that every water system serves a safe, adequate supply of water. Your water system must meet the TCEQ's rules for water treatment, quality, source approval, disinfection, distribution, storage, and capacity. The TCEQ's rules for public water systems can be found in Title 30, Texas Administrative Code (30 TAC),

Chapter 290. To view 30 TAC 290, visit the Secretary of State’s website, <[info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=4&ti=30&pt=1&ch=290](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=30&pt=1&ch=290)>.

For help understanding and complying with the TCEQ’s regulations for public water systems, visit the TCEQ’s Web page “Public Water Supply: Compliance Resources,” <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/help4pws](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/help4pws)>.

### **How Can I Protect against Backflow at My RV Park?**

When RV owners flush and clean the waste from their plumbing systems, they may inadvertently create a threat to the potable water supply. Many RVs are sold today with a “sewer flusher” connection, which allows flushing of the black-water tank. This device allows a direct connection between the black-water tank and a public water supply. However, the TCEQ prohibits the connection of a public water supply to a sewer pipe (the black-water tank of an RV holds the same materials as a sewer pipe).

To protect against backflow, RV park managers should prohibit “Y” hose adapters, which enable RV owners to establish simultaneous connection from a potable water-hose bib to both the RV’s potable-water system and its sewer flusher.

The safest option for flushing a black-water tank is a nonpotable water source at the sewer-flusher connection. If a nonpotable water source is not available and the only option for flushing the black-water tank is potable water, RV owners should connect the potable-water source to the sewer-flusher connection only during the draining of the black-water tank. RV owners should closely supervise the draining of the black-water tank and immediately disconnect the potable-water source after the tank is empty. A potable water source should *never* be left permanently connected to the sewer-flusher connection.

If you purchase water from a public water system through a master meter, the public water system may require additional backflow protection at the master meter.

## **Am I a Utility?**

If you send a separate bill for water or sewer service to residents for service, then you are a utility. However, if you supply water or sewer service to tenants of rental property and charge no separate or additional fee for it beyond the rental payment, then you are not a utility. Utilities are required to have a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN). The TCEQ’s rules for utilities can be found in 30 TAC 291 (“Utility Regulations”).

For basic information on whether and how to establish a new water or sewer utility, please see <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/startutility](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/startutility)>.

## **Is My Wastewater Disposal System Regulated?**

If you treat or dispose of wastewater—for example, using an on-site sewage facility (OSSF, or septic tank) or dump station—from RVs, your wastewater system is regulated by the TCEQ or a local authority.

If your OSSF treats more than 5,000 gallons of wastewater per day (approximately 100 hookups), you are required to get a domestic wastewater permit from the TCEQ. For information about wastewater permits, visit the TCEQ's "Domestic Wastewater Permits" Web page, <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/domww\\_permits](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/domww_permits)>.

### **Do I Need a Permit for My OSSF?**

Before you construct, alter, repair, extend, or install an on-site sewage facility, or septic system, you must obtain a permit. You will need to contact the local authority where the OSSF is located in order to get a permit. You can find your local permitting authority through the TCEQ's website at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/septic\\_contact](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/septic_contact)>.

### **Can I Pump and Haul My Wastewater?**

You are not required to obtain authorization from the TCEQ if you are collecting and temporarily storing wastewater in a containment structure that is not subject to OSSF rules. The containment structure should be in good working condition and free from leaks. The wastewater must be pumped and hauled by a TCEQ-registered transporter.

Pump-and-haul is not a preferred method for disposal of wastewater and should only be used temporarily. Any unauthorized discharge resulting from the temporary storage, pumping, and hauling of domestic wastewater is subject to administrative fines and other penalties under TCEQ rules and the Texas Water Code.

For more information on the OSSF rules, visit the TCEQ's website at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/septic](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/septic)>.

## **What Can I Do with My Garbage?**

In RV parks, trash and garbage of any kind must be properly collected in a closed receptacle, and transported to a TCEQ-authorized facility. TCEQ-authorized facilities can include transfer stations, landfills, and Citizen Collection Stations. Additionally, scrap tires, used oil, and oil filters should

be transported, recycled, or disposed of properly by companies that have registrations or permits with the TCEQ.

Improperly managed municipal solid waste can threaten human health by attracting rodents, flies, and mosquitoes that carry diseases. The TCEQ's regulations state that "no person may cause, ... allow, or permit any activity of storage, processing, removal, or disposal of any solid waste unless such activity is authorized by a permit or other authorization from the [TCEQ]." (30 TAC 330.7)

### **Burning Trash**

The TCEQ, as well as many local and county governments, has very strict rules regarding outdoor burning. Although the TCEQ allows residents of private homes to burn their domestic waste under certain circumstances, the regulations prohibit burning trash from RV parks, because these are considered commercial properties.

## **Is a Permit Required for Construction Activities?**

If you are building an RV park, and the construction will disturb 1 acre or more of land, then you will be required to obtain coverage under the TCEQ's Construction General Storm Water Permit. The permit requirements are based on the amount of land that will be disturbed according to the development plan. You can determine whether the TCEQ regulates your construction site by consulting the agency's Web page "Storm Water Discharges from Construction Activities," <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/construction](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/construction)>.

### **Construction Sites Located over the Edwards Aquifer**

When construction activities are slated to occur over the recharge, transition, or contributing zones of the Edwards Aquifer, you may need to submit an Edwards Aquifer Protection Plan to the TCEQ regional office in San Antonio or Austin. Construction sites located in Williamson, Travis, Hays, Comal, Bexar, Medina, Uvalde, and Kinney counties may be subject to the TCEQ's Edwards Aquifer rules. You can determine whether your site is located over the Edwards Aquifer by consulting the TCEQ's Edwards Aquifer Map Viewer, at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/eapp/mapviewer](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/eapp/mapviewer)>.

For assistance in determining whether the Edwards rules apply to your activities and in complying with the rules, see the TCEQ's pamphlet *Rules Protecting the Edwards Aquifer* (RG-011), available online at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/rg-011](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/rg-011)>.

## For More Information

- For confidential assistance with the TCEQ's regulations for drinking water, garbage disposal, outdoor burning, or wastewater treatment, or with any other environmental concern, call the TCEQ's Small Business and Local Government Assistance hotline at 800-447-2827, or go online to [www.TexasEnviroHelp.org](http://www.TexasEnviroHelp.org).
- For more information about outdoor burning, see the TCEQ's booklet *Outdoor Burning in Texas* (RG-049), available online at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/rg-049](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/rg-049), or the actual outdoor burning rules, 30 TAC 111B, at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/30TAC/111](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/30TAC/111).
- To view the TCEQ's Rules for Public Water Systems, 30 TAC 290, visit the TCEQ's website at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/30TAC/290](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/30TAC/290).
- To find out if your groundwater well will be subject to the rules of a local groundwater-conservation district, visit the Texas Water Development Board's Web page on groundwater-conservation districts at [www.twdb.state.tx.us/gwr/gcd/gcdhome.htm](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/gwr/gcd/gcdhome.htm). Contact your groundwater-conservation district early in the development of your RV park to learn the requirements you must follow and which applications and fees you may need to submit.
- For more information about getting an OSSF permit, visit the TCEQ's "Permitting an On-Site Sewage Facility" Web page, [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/ossf/permits](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/ossf/permits).
- For more information about backflow prevention, visit the TCEQ's "Cross-Connection Control Program" Web page, [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/ccp](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/ccp).
- For more information about utilities, visit the TCEQ's "Establishing a New Water Utility" Web page, [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/startutility](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/startutility).
- For more information on construction stormwater permits, visit the TCEQ's website, at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/construction](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/construction).
- To determine if an Edwards's Aquifer permit is needed, visit the TCEQ's "Edwards Aquifer Protection Program" Web page, [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/eapp](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/eapp).
- To report an environmental complaint, you can contact your local law enforcement office, or call the TCEQ's Environmental Complaints reporting line at 888-777-3186. You can also submit a complaint electronically at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/report\\_problem](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/report_problem).