

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the SWQM Data Management Reference Guide

The purpose of this guide is to assist the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Clean Rivers Program (CRP) partner agencies, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program contractors, Surface Water Quality Monitoring (SWQM) Program staff, Water Quality Standards (WQS) Group staff and contractors, Non-Point Source (NPS) Program contractors, and any other TCEQ programs or external entities submitting data to the TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring Information System (SWQMIS) database. This guide outlines the processes for requesting parameter codes, station ID numbers, submitting and collecting entity codes, tag prefixes, corrections to data in SWQMIS, and data reports. It also explains data review and data reporting (including data reporting formats) and contains reference maps, tables, and descriptions for use when submitting data to the TCEQ. Guidance is also provided for using SWQMIS tools to extract and interact with data in the database.

Substantive changes were made to the guide this year. Appendix E – Qualifier Codes – contains new qualifier codes that have been added, existing qualifier codes that have been revised, and some codes that have been retired.

The original water monitoring program was established in 1967 with the purpose of collecting and analyzing the data necessary to describe the water quality of Texas streams, reservoirs and estuaries. Today, SWQMIS contains more than 50 years of physicochemical and biological data from up to 9,900 monitoring stations throughout Texas. This data is collected by the TCEQ, contributing river authorities, cities, and other local, state, and federal agencies.

The TCEQ maintains SWQMIS. This database serves as a repository for TCEQ surface water quality data. SWQMIS also provides data validation and reporting tools, a mapping interface, and modules for tracking information about projects and quality assurance documents. Forms related to the TCEQ's surface water quality programs data and SWQMIS are available in the Forms module of SWQMIS. These forms include the SWQMIS Change Request Template, the Data Correction Request, the Data Review Checklist, the Parameter/Constituent Request, and the Submitting Entity/Collecting Entity/Monitoring Type Request.

The Water Quality Planning Division, Monitoring and Assessment Section's Data Management and Analysis Team (DM&A) is responsible for the management of surface water quality data and metadata in cooperation with other TCEQ water programs and the Information Resources Division (IRD). This responsibility includes documentation and maintenance of records relating to the processes described in this document. Relationships between DM&A and other water program areas are documented in project-specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs). Data not meeting quality objectives set forth in these QAPPs may be stored in SWQMIS with appropriate qualifiers (see Appendix E).

The TCEQ's statewide surface water quality database has received data since 1967, allowing for the assessment of short- and long-term trends. This data may be used by TCEQ to characterize existing conditions, evaluate spatial and temporal trends, develop water quality standards, determine water quality standards compliance, identify emerging problems, and evaluate the effectiveness of water quality control programs.

Access to SWQMIS is limited to active TCEQ surface water quality monitoring staff and a limited number of staff from active contractors. To request access to SWQMIS send an email to swqmis@tceq.texas.gov.

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