

Interim Guidance for Routine Surface Water Quality Monitoring During Extended Drought

Continue to conduct routine surface water quality monitoring (SWQM) activities according to commitments specified in the statewide [Coordinated Monitoring Schedule](#)¹ (CMS). Collect and report data according to the following guidelines.

General Guidance

Schedule and travel to SWQM monitoring sites as you would normally to meet routine commitments on the CMS. If you know or can reliably determine the scheduled monitoring site is dry or cannot be accessed due to unsafe conditions (or closed boat ramps in the case of reservoirs/lakes), it is not necessary to travel to the site. Create a sample event in SWQMIS with one sample set for field data.

At the monitoring site take pictures of the flow or reservoir level conditions. Take photos even if the monitoring site is dry. Include comments in field notes indicating drought conditions and other observations.

Report the actual number of days since the last significant precipitation (parameter code 72053) if known. Please note the statewide outlier maximum for this parameter is set to detect outliers at 75 days and it may be necessary to complete verification steps when submitting data to SWQMIS.

Reservoirs and Lakes

Collect routine water samples and field data if it is possible to safely launch a boat and navigate to within 400 meters of the monitoring station. If it is not possible to safely launch a boat or if boat ramps are closed, then report a value of 1 to indicate reservoir access was not possible (parameter code 00051 - reservoir access not possible -- level too low).

Additionally, record the reservoir percent full (parameter code 00053) if the water body is available on the [Water Data for Texas](#)² website published by the Texas Water Development Board.

Streams and Rivers

Collect routine water samples and field data if there is water present within approximately 400 meters of the monitoring station. If the stream channel at the monitoring site is dry, report a flow severity (parameter code 01351) value of 6, and do not report flow. If the stream channel at the monitoring site contains water but there is no flow, report a flow severity value of 1 and an instantaneous stream flow (parameter code 00061) of 0.0 cfs. Collect water samples and field

¹ <https://cms.lcra.org/>

² <https://www.waterdatafortexas.org/reservoirs/statewide>

data from a pool if it is greater than or equal to 10 meters in length and greater than or equal to 0.4 meters in depth.

The total length of the reach upstream/downstream of a sample station to determine pool coverage should be between 500 and 800 meters. The actual length of the survey should be recorded in the comments section.

Determine the percent pool coverage in a 500-meter reach by physically measuring the pool (preferred method), but a visual estimate may also be made. If using a global positioning system (GPS) begin by zeroing the tracking function on the GPS unit and walking upstream until several bends are included or the stream characteristics begin to repeat, or access is not available. Record the GPS position on the upstream end. A similar distance should be walked on the downstream portion and that position recorded. The main pool within this area should be measured for length, width and depth. The length of any additional pools within the reach should be summed and added to the main pool to get a percent coverage. Report all pool characteristics using the parameter codes in Table 1.

Table 1. Measured pool characteristics

Parameter Code	Description
89864	Maximum pool width (meters)
89865	Maximum pool depth (meters)
89869	Pool length in meters (meters)
89870	Percent pool coverage in 500-meter reach
82903	Depth of bottom of water body at sample site

If a GPS is used in conjunction with a mapping software (e.g., Google Earth), then two significant figures should be reported. If a rangefinder is used, two significant figures should be reported. If a visual estimate is made, then only one significant figure should be reported.

Provide a description of where the main pool is located in relation to the bridge crossing in the comments section along with any other pertinent details such as the presence of fish, mussels, or other wildlife. Photographs upstream and downstream of the bridge and of the main pool are encouraged.

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For Use Attainability Analyses, or other monitoring directed specifically at addressing water quality issues for water bodies on the 303d List significantly affected by the extreme drought conditions contact TCEQ Water Quality Standards Program and/or TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring Team prior to collecting samples.