

## What is a Water Allocation Notation?

Water allocation notations are a water management tool that indicates a potential lack of water availability on a source. Water allocation notations apply to both stream water and aquifers (groundwater). Notations provide useful information to potential water licence applicants as well as decision makers. Further to considering water allocation notations and other available information, decision makers may include terms and conditions in an authorization where a notation exists. Depending on the notation assigned to the water source, prospective applicants may consider applying instead on different water sources nearby not displaying notations or to prepare themselves to be allocated less water than requested in the application.

Water allocation notations are entered into the provincial eLicensing system. The terms “recorded water” and “unrecorded water” are defined under [the Water Sustainability Act](#). “Recorded water” means the rights to use the water have been allocated under an authorization (e.g. a water licence) or under another law or regulation. “Unrecorded water” means water in a stream or aquifer that is not currently authorized or allocated.

The five water allocation notations that are used are:

1. **Application Refused (AR) (previously Refused No Water or RNW):** A previous application for an authorization was refused because there was insufficient water to grant the application.
2. **Possible Water Shortage (PWS):** There appears to be limited unrecorded water in a stream or aquifer for any additional authorizations (e.g. the source is nearing Fully Recorded state or insufficient water at critical periods).
3. **Fully Recorded (FR):** There is insufficient unrecorded water in the stream or aquifer for any additional authorizations. Note: this notation does not apply to domestic groundwater use from an aquifer unless an applicable regulation under s. 135 [regulations for closing or restricting access to water source] or 136 [regulations requiring authorizations for domestic use of groundwater] of the *Water Sustainability Act* is made.
4. **Fully Recorded Except (FR-EXC):** there is limited unrecorded water in the stream or aquifer for additional authorization. Exceptions may be allowed for specified water use purposes (e.g. domestic), small quantities works (e.g. domestic or small irrigation), or where the impact is mitigated (e.g. having sufficient off-stream storage).
5. **Office Reserve (OR):** An office reserve is established as a temporary notation that preserves unrecorded water in a stream or an aquifer pending negotiations or decisions. An OR may be superseded in time by a water reservation under s. 39 or s. 40 of the *Water Sustainability Act*. Contact the Comptroller of Water Rights’ Office for additional information on the specific notation.