



## POTABLE WATER

Generally potable waters are defined as water which is intended for human consumption.

This water can be used for drinking, washing or showering and in the manufacturing of food and drinks.

Above all, the water should be safe to use and pleasing to the nose, eye and taste with no suspended matter, harmful chemicals or pathogenic micro-organisms.

The safety of water as it relates to public health is determined by its physical appearance, and the chemical and microbiological content, of these, the microbiological quality is seen as the most important.

Contamination of drinking water by micro-organisms is usually attributed directly or indirectly by animal or human faeces. These organisms will include bacteria, viruses and protozoa and the diseases that they cause vary from very mild to severe, and in some cases fatal. Those at greatest risk are the very young, the sick and the elderly.

To assess whether water has been contaminated the accepted indicator organisms are coliforms (as faecal coliforms and E. coli ) a group of bacteria which are present in high numbers in the faeces of warm blooded animals. The presence of coliforms means that the water is probably contaminated by faecal matter. Coliforms should not be detected in potable waters and their presence poses a serious health concern.

Quality potable water ( i.e. drinking water ) is as a general rule readily available throughout Australia from various water authorities who closely scrutinise and monitor their product to ensure that it is safe to the consumer.

	Coliforms per 100mL	E.coli per 100mL	Ps. Aeruginosa per 100mL	SPC cfu/mL
<b>Drinking</b>	Nil	Nil	*	<100
<b>AQIS registered facilities</b>	Nil	Nil	*	<100
<b>Food Processing</b>	Nil	Nil		
<b>Public swimming pools &amp; spas</b>	<4	Nil	Nil	<100

### Water Quality Criteria

\*\* Pseudomonas spp. – This group of organisms is tested for drinking and food processing water in order to gain an overall assessment of water quality. It is not an essential requirement so no specification level has been given.

References: Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 1996, Department of Health NSW Public Swimming Pool & Spa Pool Guidelines – June 1996

Other areas for consideration where water is used but where there are no stated guidelines:-

Industrial safety showers and industrial fixed onsite eye wash systems should be flushed on a regular basis to ensure that they are free of any debris such as, dirt or corrosion product, and a bacterial test should be taken to ensure that there is no significant presence of harmful bacteria.

### Independent Monitoring Consultants

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