

Division of Water

Water Quality Standards



<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/water/wqsar/trireview/trireview.htm>

2003-2005 Triennial Review

Section Manager, Nancy Sonafrank

Frequently Asked Questions:

2005 Proposed Dissolved Oxygen and Analytical Methods Revisions

Dissolved Oxygen

What is Dissolved Oxygen? Dissolved Oxygen (DO) is a measure of the amount of oxygen that is dissolved in water. Temperature of the water affects the DO level; colder waters tend to have a higher DO level than warmer waters. It can be a measure of water quality: the higher the DO the better the water quality.

Why amend the DO provisions? During the 2003 triennial review seafood processors asked the Department to look at the Marine Water Supply Seafood Processing criterion for DO. Upon review the department determined that seafood processing use is not dependent upon any level of DO in the water.

What effect will this change have on water quality? The water that will be affected is the water drawn into seafood processing facilities and only used in the processing of seafood. No other uses of the water will be affected. This change will NOT change the aquatic life criterion for marine waters in bays, estuaries or the ocean. The most stringent criterion is used to determine if a wastewater discharge or a waterbody meets the state water quality standard. This change will not affect any fresh water criteria.

Analytical Methods

What are Analytical Methods? These are the methods used by laboratories to test water. The methods are standardized to ensure quality and repeatability among many different laboratories. The methods are updated periodically and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chooses to approve the updated methods. The methods are described in a book called Standard Methods, with the most recent edition being the 20th edition.

Why amend the Analytical Methods? The changes to the analytical methods are intended to update the methods cited in the Alaska Water Quality Standards to be consistent with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) methods approved for the Clean Water Act purposes. The EPA published their list of updated approved methods in the Federal Register in October 2002. These are changes to the citation of measurement techniques, but they do not include any changes to the water quality criteria.