

2025 Handbook of Florida Water Regulation: Table of Contents¹

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Preface

This handbook is designed to provide an accurate, current, and authoritative summary of the principal federal and state (Florida) laws that directly or indirectly relate to agriculture. This handbook provides a basic overview of the many rights and responsibilities that farmers and farmland owners have under federal and state laws and the appropriate contact information to obtain more detailed information. However, the reader should be aware that because the laws, administrative rulings, and court decisions on which this handbook is based are subject to constant revision, portions of this publication could become outdated at any time. Several details of cited laws are also left out due to space limitations. This handbook is an educational text for those interested in water use and water resource issues in Florida.

This handbook is distributed with the understanding that the authors are not engaged in rendering legal or other professional advice, and the information contained herein should not be regarded as a substitute for professional advice. This handbook is not all-inclusive in providing information to achieve compliance with the federal and state laws and regulations governing water protection. For these reasons, the use of these materials by any person constitutes an agreement to hold harmless the authors, the UF/IFAS Center for Agricultural and Natural Resource Law, and UF/IFAS Extension for any liability claims, damages, or expenses that any person may incur as a result of reference to or reliance on the information contained in this handbook. Note: UF/IFAS is the acronym for University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

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Table 1. Description of handbook contents, by topic.

	Title	Description	DLN*
Introduction and Overview			
	Table of Contents	List of all the documents in the handbook	FE579
	Introduction	General purpose of handbook	FE580
	Florida Water Policy Framework and Institutions	Overview of water quality and quantity/use regulations	FE1043
Key Federal Laws			
	Clean Water Act	Federal law to maintain and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of US navigable waters (such as rivers and lakes)	FE582
	Safe Drinking Water Act	Federal law to protect US drinking water systems from contaminants	FE587
	Endangered Species Act	Federal law to protect US fish, wildlife, and plants that are threatened with extinction	FE592
Key State Laws			
	State Regulatory Powers	Summary of Florida state regulatory powers	FE581
	Florida Air and Water Pollution Control Act	State law to conserve, protect, and improve the quality of Florida's waters	FE607
	Florida Watershed Restoration Act	State law to protect Florida's water quality through the Total Maximum Daily Load program	FE608
	Florida Pollutant Discharge Prevention and Control Act	State law to maintain the sea coast and coastal waters, beaches, and adjoining public lands in as close to a pristine condition as possible	FE585
Key State Agencies			
	Florida Department of Environmental Protection	Primary state agency for preservation of environmental integrity of Florida's physical environment, including water resources	FE593
	Florida Water Management Districts	State regional agencies for management of water and related land resources	FE594
	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	State agency for management, protection, and conservation of wild animal life and freshwater aquatic life	FE595
	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	State agency that carries out functions related to farming practices and products, including projects to minimize impact of agriculture on water resource	FE596
	Florida Department of Health	State agency for implementing procedures to promote and protect public health and safety, including protecting public drinking supply sources	FE597
	Soil and Water Conservation Districts	Local agencies for providing assistance/guidance to landowners/stakeholders in implementing land and water resource protection practices	FE1017
Selected Permits Required for Water Resource Use			
	Consumptive Use Permits	Permits for consumptive uses of water (any use of water that reduces water availability in the source from which the water is withdrawn or diverted)	FE604
	Management and Storage of Surface Waters	Permits for construction, operation, or alteration of stormwater management systems, dams, impoundments, reservoirs, or appurtenances	FE605

	Title	Description	DLN*
	Water Wells	Permits for construction, repair, or abandonment of water wells	FE603
Agricultural Best Management Practices			
	Agricultural Best Management Practices	Overview of how farmers should utilize best management practices to minimize potential impacts of production activities on water resources	FE600
Wetlands and Connected Systems			
	Activities in Wetlands	Overview of statutes that protect wetlands	FE606
	Florida Everglades Forever Act	Restoration of the Everglades ecosystem by state and federal governments	FE609
	Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program	Program to improve and protect the water quality and quantity in the Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, and St. Lucie River watersheds	FE610
Protection of Groundwater			
	Federal Rules for Discharges into Groundwater	Overview of federal statutory directives that affect or have the potential to affect groundwater	FE602
	State Rules for Discharges into Groundwater	Overview of state statutory directives for groundwater quality protection	FE601
	Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act	State law to protect springs fed by the Floridan aquifer	FE1019
	Water Wells	Summary of state statutory directives to safeguard the quality of both well water and aquifer water	FE603
	Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal	Regulations for onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (such as septic tanks)	FE614
Regulation of Toxic and Hazardous Substances with Potential Impact on Water Resources			
	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	Federal law for investigation and cleanup of sites contaminated by hazardous substances	FE584
	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act	Federal law to regulate toxic chemicals, hazardous chemicals, and extremely hazardous substances	FE586
	Toxic Substances Control Act and the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act	Federal law to regulate the manufacturing, disposing, importing, distributing, using, and processing of all toxic chemicals	FE591
Pesticide Regulations			
	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act	Federal law to regulate all phases of pesticide sale, use, handling, and disposal	FE588
	Food Quality Protection Act	Overview of the amount of pesticide residue that can be legally present in/on food	FE589
	Florida Pesticide Law	Regulations for the distribution, sale, and use of pesticides in Florida	FE590
	Pollutant Storage Tank Systems	Regulations for tank systems that store pesticides, oils, gasoline, or ammonia or chlorine compounds/derivatives	FE613
Regulation of Wastes with Potential Impact on Water Resources			
	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act	Cradle-to-grave approach to monitoring wastes	FE583
	Solid Waste Management	Regulations for the disposal of solid waste	FE611

	Title	Description	DLN*
	Hazardous Waste Management	Regulations for hazardous waste management	FE612
Private Regulations			
	Private Regulation	Overview of terms related to private lawsuits concerning water resources	FE598
	Florida Right-to-Farm Act	Law to protect reasonable farm operations from nuisance lawsuits	FE599
Supplementary Materials			
	Appendix	List of acronyms	FE615
	Contact Agencies	Contacts of key state and federal agencies	FE616
	Notes and Glossary	Definition of the key terms	FE617
*DLN = Digital Library Number within the EDIS system			

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