

2025 Handbook of Florida Water Regulation: Florida Department of Health¹

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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 both federal and state laws as well as 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decisions on which this handbook is based are subject to constant revision, portions of this publication could become outdated at any time.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 provided as 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 may be incurred by any person 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.

FDOH Overview

The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) is largely responsible for implementing procedures to promote and protect public health and safety. Farmers must consider FDOH regulations when they are involved in activities that might impact the quality of public drinking supplies. FDOH

conducts well surveys and sampling for Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to protect, manage, and prioritize the cleanup of contaminated sites. FDOH also provides an alternate drinking source when the water exceeds the maximum contaminant level. For a list of the maximum contaminant levels for individual chemicals, visit http://www.floridahealth.gov/Environmental-Health/drinking-water/_documents/hal-list.pdf.

Of particular concern to the agency is sewage pollution of Florida's groundwater. FDOH issues permits for construction or installation of septic tanks and other onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems. These permits include requirements for the following:

- Distance and set-backs from wells and surface waters
- Soil conditions
- Estimated seasonal high water table
- Daily flow thresholds (see FE614, Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal)

Written permits issued through the local county health department branch of FDOH are required prior to constructing any onsite sewage treatment and disposal system. FDOH will penalize anyone who unlawfully deposits filth or polluting substances.

More information can be found at the FDOH website (<https://www.doh.state.fl.us/>).

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