

Taking and using water: how-to guide

Before you start taking and using water from a water source such as a river, lake, or a groundwater source, there are some things you need to know.

Depending on how much water you want to take and what you're using it for, there are some requirements you must follow. There are three different pathways that you may be able to use to start taking and using water. This guide will help you to figure out which is the best option for you. If you want to take water for more than one use (even when from the same source), you'll need to use more than one of the pathways below.

If you are planning to take water for multiple uses, please contact Consents Public Enquiries at public.enquiries@orc.govt.nz so we can guide you through your options.

Important note:

The information provided about the Regional Plan: Water Permitted Activity may change after 30 June 2024. Otago Regional Council is currently working on a new Land and Water Regional Plan which will replace the existing Regional Plan: Water. The new plan is due to be notified on 30 June 2024. For more information on this process, please see orc.govt.nz/lwrp

Legal pathways for water takes:

Resource Management Act

Allows a person to take a reasonable* amount of water for their domestic use and/or stock drinking water purposes.

* For an individual household, reasonable is 2000 L per day

* For stock drinking water, check with the industry group relevant for your stock to find out what is considered a reasonable volume of stock drinking water.

You do not need to apply for the water take and use above under this act, but you need to ensure you meet the requirements.

Regional Plan: Water Permitted Activity

Rules in the Regional Plan: Water allow a person to take water for a range of different uses.

There are rules about how much water you can take, and for the purpose it is being taken for.

You do not need to apply for this water take and use if it is a permitted activity in the Regional Plan, but you need to ensure you meet the requirements.

Resource Consent

You can apply for resource consent to take and use water. This pathway is for purposes that are not permitted under the Regional Plan: Water or the Resource Management Act.

You will need to apply to Otago Regional Council for water takes that require resource consent. If granted, you will receive written permission for taking and using the water. The consent will have restrictions (called 'conditions', e.g. how much water you can take per day, per month, and per year).

Which pathway do I use? Can I use more than one?

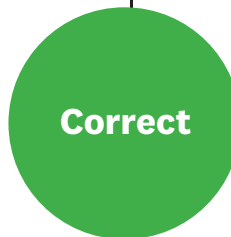
If you're taking water for more than one purpose, you will need to use more than one pathway to do this. For example, if you want to take water for both domestic use and irrigation, then you would have to use two different pathways. If you're only using the water for one purpose, then you can take it using only one pathway.

PLEASE NOTE :
The taking of water for the below purposes are examples only and do not specifically need to be taken under the pathways indicated

Example 1: Taking water for one use

This example shows how you can take water for one purpose (in this case domestic use). You can take water for one purpose under any of the three pathways, you choose the **one** pathway you prefer.


Use of water:	RMA	Permitted Activity Rule under Regional Plan: Water	Resource Consent
Domestic use		✓	



Example 2: Taking water for two uses at the same time

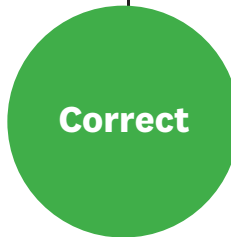
Taking water for different purposes at the same time is allowed, this is called “stacking” water takes but must be done under different pathways.

Use of water:	RMA	Permitted Activity Rule under Regional Plan: Water	Resource Consent
Domestic use		✓	
Irrigation			✓



Example 3: Taking water for three uses

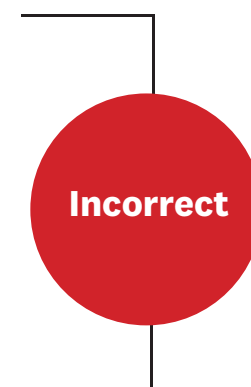
Use of water:	RMA	Permitted Activity Rule under Regional Plan: Water	Resource Consent
Domestic use	✓		
Irrigation		✓	
Dairy shed supply			✓



*Note that each activity for taking water is for a different purpose and there is no more than one purpose for each pathway.

Example of INCORRECT taking of water for three uses

Use of water:	RMA	Permitted Activity Rule under Regional Plan: Water	Resource Consent
Domestic use	✓		
Irrigation		✓	
Irrigation			✗



This example is incorrect, as water is being taken for the same purpose under two different legal pathways. In the example, water is already being taken for irrigation under a permitted activity rule under the Regional Plan: Water, hence, cannot also be taken under a resource consent at the same time.

Does it matter where you take the water from?

If you're taking water under more than one pathway, you should talk to us about where you are taking this water from. It's most likely that it will need to be from different sources. Get in touch so we can help you.

A new resource management system for Aotearoa

New laws are being phased in that are intended to replace the Resource Management Act, one being the Natural and Built Environment Act which started coming into effect on 24 August 2023. It will gradually phase in over around 10 years. If you submit an application for a consent related to freshwater activities after 24 August 2023, the consent can only have a maximum duration allowed under the Natural and Built Environment Act. For further information, go to the [Ministry for the Environment](#) website.

Further information

[Resource Management Act - Section 14\(3\)\(b\)](#)

[Regional Plan Water Permitted Activity - See 12.1.2 rules for surface water and 12.2.2 rules for groundwater](#)

Contact

You can contact us by email at public.enquiries@orc.govt.nz or by calling 0800 474 082.