

When and How to Issue Alternative Specifications by Qualified Professionals (P. Eng. or P. Geo.) under the GWPR

For flexibility, the Ground Water Protection Regulation (GWPR) allows a Qualified Professional (QP) to issue alternative specifications where it is not technically feasible to follow the minimum standards in the Regulation and the Code of Practice. Prior to issuing alternative specifications, however, the QP must be satisfied that the alternative specifications will achieve the same results as the original standards set out in the GWPR. In those circumstances, the work must then be done according to “alternative specifications” issued by the QP. Table 1 below summarizes: a) the standards for which QPs can issue alternative specifications and b) circumstances to which they apply.

Table 1.

Requirement	Provision in GWPR	Circumstances
Length of a surface seal	Table 1	For some types of wells, if it is not feasible to install a surface seal to the minimum length as specified in Table 1 of the GWPR, a lesser length is allowable provided the QP confirms in writing that it will not significantly increase the risk of a contaminant entering the well or aquifer.
An order to alter or close a well	Section 9(5)	If it is not feasible to alter or close an existing well in accordance with the standards in the GWPR, a QP can recommend alternative specifications for deactivation or well closure provided the QP confirms in writing that it will not significantly increase the risk of a contaminant entering the well or aquifer, and the written confirmation of alternative specifications is attached to the well closure report.
Length of closure plug	Table 3	Where it is not feasible to install a closure plug to the minimum length as specified in Table 3 of the GWPR, a lesser length is allowable provided the QP confirms in writing that it will not significantly increase the risk of a contaminant entering the well or aquifer.
Well caps and well covers	Section 10(5)	If it is not feasible to install a well cap or well cover that meets the specifications of section 7 of the Code, a qualified well driller, qualified well pump installer or QP can issue alternative specifications for a well cap or cover.
Capping a well	Table 4	For some types of wells, a QP may confirm that a well cap is not required.
Water entering the well sump, well pit or pumphouse	Section 12(3)	If the water cannot be conveyed away from the wellhead, a QP can determine how to deal with the water entering the well sump, pit or pumphouse. Written confirmation is not required.
Temporary wells and boreholes	Section 13(2)	If a temporary well is to be kept open more than 90 days or if a borehole is to be kept open for more than 30 days, a QP must confirm in writing that the temporary well or borehole will not impair ground water quality or pose a threat to human health or safety.