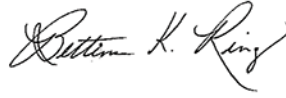


## Policy and Procedure 18-6 Water Quality Complaint Investigation

Issued By: Bettina K. Ring, State Forester



**Effective Date:** December 15, 2016

**Codes/Mandates:** Code of Virginia: [§2.2-4000A](#); [§10.1-1181.1](#) through [§10.1-1181.7](#)

**References:** [Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Technical Guide](#)  
[Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Field Guide](#)

**Forms:** IFRIS Harvest Inspection Report [Form 18.2 Harvest Inspection]  
*Form may be used as a backup if IFRIS is unavailable or as a worksheet to collect information for IFRIS; information must be entered into IFRIS.*

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## PURPOSE

To provide a standard process for addressing citizen concerns regarding possible water quality problems arising from silvicultural activities.

## POLICY

Virginia Department of Forestry policy is to respond to all complaints indicating specific pollution in the form of sedimentation from silvicultural activity. These complaints are designated high priority for VDOF field staff and must be responded to immediately. For every water quality complaint, field staff will perform an inspection immediately, but no longer than **three (3) working days** from the date the complaint is received.

## DEFINITIONS

“**Agency**” and “**VDOF**” means the Virginia Department of Forestry.

“**Commonwealth**” means the Commonwealth of Virginia.

“**Operator**” means any person that operates or has operated or exercises or has exercised control over any silvicultural activity.

"**Owner**" means any person that (i) owns or leases land on which silvicultural activity occurs or has occurred or (ii) owns timber on land on which silvicultural activity occurs or has occurred.

## PROCEDURES

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### Inspection

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Upon receipt of a water quality complaint:

- ◆ Perform an on-site visit immediately, but no longer than **three (3) working days** from the date the complaint is received, to determine if the problem is a valid timber harvesting operation.
  - If the area field staff is unable to inspect in a timely manner, contact a regional water quality engineer or specialist for assistance.
- ◆ If the operation is not a valid timber harvesting operation (construction or land clearing for agriculture or development), notify the relevant agency, close out the complaint without a harvest inspection and notify the complainant if they provided contact information.
- ◆ If the problem is a valid timber harvesting operation, perform a harvest inspection.
- ◆ Enter the complaint details and inspection results into IFRIS (water quality program area), creating a harvest inspection report.
  - All complaint investigations and harvest inspections will be recorded in IFRIS.
  - The Form 18.2 Harvest Inspection may be used in the event that IFRIS is unavailable or as a worksheet to collect information for IFRIS.

### Violation Identified

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When water quality complaint inspections identify a forestry water quality concern, area field staff will notify a regional water quality engineer or specialist to proceed with water quality law enforcement procedures [\[See VDOF Policy and Procedure 18-3 Water Quality Law Enforcement\]](#).

### Authority

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This policy and procedure is issued by the Virginia state forester.

### Interpretation

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The water quality program manager and chief of operations is responsible for the interpretation of this policy and procedure.