

# **Water bore driller's licencing handbook**

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## Approval

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# 1 Introduction

Queensland is part of a national licencing system for water bore drillers that aims to protect underground water resources while making it easier for drillers to work across state borders.

The licencing arrangements of the *Water Act 2000* (Water Act) and the Water Regulation 2016 (Water Regulation) achieve this by ensuring that all water bore drillers are properly skilled and that their work meets minimum standards.

As the licencing system is based on the national system, Queensland drillers should find it relatively easy to obtain licences to work in other parts of Australia.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (the department), as the licencing authority, has produced the *Water bore driller's licencing handbook* (handbook) to explain:

- how the Queensland system works;
- how it applies to different types of water bores; and
- what skills, qualifications and experience drillers need to obtain or upgrade licences.

## 2 Departmental roles

The Water Act provides a framework for the sustainable allocation and management of Queensland's water resources and licencing water bore drillers. The department administers the Water Act.

The department is responsible for:

- licencing only those drillers who meet the required standards; and
- monitoring drillers' work so they continue to meet this standard.

The Water Act separates the right to take underground water from the right to construct water bores. The right to take water (that is to access a share of the water resource) is authorised under the Water Act.

The right to take underground water is either:

- permitted in legislation (and a licence or permit is not required); or
- granted under a licence, water allocation, seasonal assignment, or water permit.

## 3 Consultation with drillers

The drilling industry is represented by the Queensland chapter of the Australian Drilling Industry Association (ADIA) through its representatives on the Drillers Licencing Review Committee (DLRC), which is chaired by the department.

The committee's chief role is to provide the department with advice and recommendations on driller licencing matters and water bore construction standards.

## 4 Who must have a water bore driller's licence

In Queensland, all water bores deeper than six metres, including monitoring bores, must be constructed by, or under the supervision of, a licensed water bore driller. This driller must have the correct class and endorsements on their licence for the type of activity being performed.

A licensed driller needs to be on the drilling site while the work is being undertaken. It is acceptable for the licensed driller to take a break from the drilling work and allow an unlicensed, but supervised driller, to continue with the work. However, in this case the licensed driller must be available to direct or else take over the work, should it be required.

It is acceptable for the licensed driller to be away from the rig, for example in an on-site caravan, as long as they are on the drill site and available to provide direction or take over the work, if and when required.

The licensed driller remains responsible for the work at all times and needs to be on-site while the drilling activities are happening.

Drilling activities that must be performed or supervised by a licensed water bore driller include:

- drilling, deepening, enlarging or casing a water bore;
- removing, replacing, altering, or repairing the casing, lining or screen of a water bore other than a subartesian bore casing less than 1.2m below the surface; and
- decommissioning an abandoned water bore.

Bores constructed for the mining of salt from underground water sources must be constructed by licensed water bore drillers, as these are considered water bores under the Water Act.

A water bore driller's licence may not be required if a petroleum tenure holder converts a well to a water bore in accordance with the 'Code of Practice for Constructing and Abandoning Coal Seam Gas Wells and Associated Bores in Queensland'.

## 5 Other legislation requirements

To drill a bore, development approval under the *Planning Act 2016* may be required.

Where a development approval is required, the landholder will either require a development permit or compliance with a self-assessable code under the Water Regulation. Information on the need for development approval of bores can be obtained from your local departmental office.

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* sets out the general environmental duty of all people to take reasonable and practicable measures to prevent or minimise the environmental harm resulting from their actions. This general environmental duty applies to all drilling activities in addition to specific requirements, for example when drilling at a contaminated site.

Other acts such as *Information Privacy Act 2009*, apply to driller's personal information disclosure such as name, contact details and company.

Underground water sampling, geothermal, gas and petroleum drilling is regulated under legislation mentioned in section 6.

## 6 Petroleum, gas, geothermal and mineral exploration drillers

Mineral exploration bores, including those drilled solely for the purpose of sampling of underground water, and geothermal, gas and petroleum wells do not need to be constructed by drillers licensed under the Water Act. This is provided these bores are not constructed as water bores, including monitoring bores. Such drilling is regulated under other legislation such as the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, *Mineral Resources Act 1989*, and *Geothermal Energy Act 2010*. Petroleum drilling is regulated under the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* or the *Petroleum Act 1923* (the petroleum legislation).

Before proceeding with any such work, drillers operating on a petroleum tenure, geothermal tenure or mining tenement should find out about the relevant requirements for exploration, petroleum, gas or geothermal drilling from their employer.

Mineral exploration bores, geothermal wells, and petroleum and gas wells cannot be converted to permanent monitoring, observation or water supply bores unless:

- this work is undertaken or supervised by a licensed water bore driller; or
- the bore or well is converted to a water bore in accordance with the relevant code.

Where no work is required to convert a well to a water bore, the construction of the original well must have been supervised by an onsite licensed water bore driller and a drill log must be submitted by the driller to the department within 60 business days of commencing drilling.

Under the petroleum legislation, a coal seam gas well can be converted to a water bore by the tenure holder provided the drilling is undertaken in accordance with the 'Code of Practice for Constructing and Abandoning Coal Seam Gas Wells and Associated Bores in Queensland'.

Further information on the conversion of mineral, geothermal, petroleum and gas exploration holes for use as water bores is available on the department's website.

## 7 Geotechnical and contaminated site drillers

Geotechnical and contaminated site drillers need only be a licensed water bore driller if they are constructing water bores (including cased underground water monitoring bores) deeper than six metres.

Contaminated site drillers may also need a site management plan under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* when drilling at a contaminated site.

## 8 Interstate drillers

Interstate licensed drillers will require a Queensland driller's licence to operate in Queensland. They will be regarded as holding the necessary qualification and experience to operate in Queensland where they hold the same qualification granted in another state in accordance with the National Uniform Driller's Licencing Committee (NUDLC) standards.

Where the licence was not issued in accordance with the national driller's licencing guidelines, applicants will be required to meet additional requirements.



## 9 Overseas drillers

Overseas drillers cannot work in Queensland as water bore drillers unless they have a Queensland water bore driller's licence. To obtain a Queensland water bore driller's licence, applicants must:

- complete the Water Act examination
- pass the relevant Australian Drillers Industry Association (ADIA) examination for the required class of licence and endorsements
- demonstrate the necessary experience for operating a drilling machine
- pass the relevant exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- undertake a mandatory on-site assessment.

## 10 Register of licensed water bore drillers

The department maintains a public register containing details about licensed water bore drillers in Queensland. This provides information for people to contact a licensed driller in their area.

In accordance with its obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, the department can provide the details of a driller's name, contact details and the company they work for if the driller has given consent to be included on the public register.

The public register can be found on the department's website and is updated on a regular basis.

## 11 Overview of driller's licencing system

Under the Water Regulation the driller's licencing system comprises three classes of licence backed by drilling method endorsements. The licence classes match the skills required to work in different types of aquifers, while the types of endorsement reflect different drilling and construction methods.

All licences are subject to a set of standard conditions, while some licensees have further restrictions placed on their licences, depending on their experience and qualifications. The licence classes, endorsements and conditions are explained later in this handbook.

Before applying for a licence, drillers must obtain the relevant qualifications or skills listed in this handbook.

## 12 Classes of driller's licences

The following sections describe the class 1, 2 and 3 attributes and requirements.

### 12.1 Class 1

This class of licence permits work in non-flowing (subartesian) single aquifer systems.

A class 1 licence authorises the holder to drill a subartesian bore in a formation that contains the aquifer closest to the land surface.

Class 1 drillers are not allowed to drill through the upper aquifer formation to tap deeper formations. The skills required relate to protecting aquifers from surface contamination by grout sealing the casing borehole annulus at the surface.

## 12.2 Class 2

In addition to class 1 work, a class 2 licence permits work in non-flowing (subartesian) multiple aquifer systems.

Class 2 drillers are allowed to drill through the upper aquifer formation to tap deeper subartesian formations.

Drillers working in multiple aquifer systems require extensive knowledge and skill to prevent inter-aquifer cross-flow within water bores, which if not prevented, could result in aquifer contamination or depletion.

## 12.3 Class 3

In addition to class 2 work, a class 3 licence permits bore drilling in non-flowing (sub-artesian) and flowing (artesian) aquifer systems. Drillers working in artesian aquifers require a higher level of knowledge and skill than class 2 drillers, because they need to construct water bores in ways that allow them to control hydrostatic pressures and undertake deeper pressure cementing.

## 13 Where a driller drills into an aquifer they are not licensed for

Drillers who drill into an aquifer system for which they are not licensed (for example, a class 2 driller who encounters an unexpected artesian aquifer) must contact the department as soon as it is practical to do so for instructions on how to proceed by either constructing the bore or decommissioning the hole.

Provided drillers act reasonably and contact the department in a timely fashion, there should be no cause for action to be taken against the licensed driller especially where the drilling was a genuine mistake and unintended.

## 14 Drilling method endorsements

Water bore driller licences are endorsed for one or more of the following methods:

- **cable tool**—permits use of cable tool or cable percussion techniques
- **auger**—permits use of bucket, hollow-stem or solid-stem auger techniques
- **rotary air**—permits use of pneumatic rotary drilling techniques including down-hole hammers
- **rotary mud**—permits use of water or water-based hydraulic rotary drilling techniques
- **non-drilling rig**—permits use of non-drilling rig methods, such as spear point construction and the construction of water wells

- **sonic**—permits drilling operations which use vibration (resonation) and downward force to advance the drill string and where the strata is retrieved via a core.

## **15 Licence requirements, standards, fees, renewals and term**

Queensland licensed water bore drillers must comply with certain standards and requirements in order to retain their licences.

### **15.1 Minimum construction requirements for water bores in Australia**

All water bores drilled in Queensland must be constructed to meet the standards contained in the 'Minimum Construction Requirements for Water Bores in Australia'. The document is available from your local departmental office or from the department's website.

### **15.2 Minimum standards for construction and reconditioning of bores that intersect sediments of artesian basins in Queensland**

Work on artesian and subartesian bores that intersect the sediments of artesian basins must be carried out to meet the standards contained in the 'Minimum Standards for the Construction and Reconditioning of Water Bores that Intersect Sediments of Artesian Basins in Queensland'. This standard applies to aquifers managed under the Water Plan (Great Artesian Basin and Other Regional Aquifers) 2017.

The standard and maps showing the parts of Queensland to which it applies are available from your local departmental office or from the department's website.

### **15.3 Development permits**

If a development permit is required for a water bore, the driller must sight the authorisations before starting work on the bore, and construct the bore in accordance with the conditions of the permit. This is a condition of all Queensland water bore driller's licences.

It is the landholder's responsibility to obtain a development permit before drilling work commences.

A development permit is not required for any petroleum or gas wells converted to water bores under the 'Code of Practice for Constructing and Abandoning Coal Seam Gas Wells and Associated Bores in Queensland'.

For details about which water bores may require a development permit contact the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

### **15.4 Self-assessable codes for water bores**

Self-assessable water bores do not require a development permit, but need to be constructed in accordance with the self-assessable code. The landholder is responsible for complying with the self-assessable code and for employing a licensed driller with the correct class and endorsements on their licence for the type of activity being performed.

For details about which water bores are self-assessable and copies of the relevant self-assessable codes contact your local departmental office or visit the department's website.

## 15.5 Drill logs

Drillers must supply the department with a completed drilling log on the approved form within 60 business days of commencing drilling. Drill log books are available from some departmental offices. For more information visit the department's website.

## 15.6 Other licence restrictions

Other restrictions can be placed on individual licences where an applicant is considered unqualified to hold an unrestricted licence. For example, a licence might restrict drilling to certain areas and to certain types of bores.

## 15.7 Upgrading or amending licences

A licensed driller may apply to upgrade a licence to a higher class, or to amend a licence to have a restriction removed or an additional drilling method endorsed. An upgraded or amended licence will have effect until the expiry of the original licence.

## 15.8 Period of licence

New licences are issued for 10 years and may be renewed for 10 years. Licensees are responsible for ensuring that licences are current and it is recommended that renewal applications be completed well before licences expire (see section 26).

## 15.9 Fees

Driller's licencing fees are reviewed and subject to change each year. Refer to the Water Regulation for current information on driller's licence fees. For a list of departmental offices where fees can be paid visit the department's website.

## 16 Driller's licencing offences under the Water Act

The Water Act sets out a number of specific driller's licencing offences and the maximum penalties that can be imposed. Penalties set out in the Water Act are described in terms of penalty units, which are defined in the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992*. The major water bore drilling offences (maximum 500 penalty units) include:

- drilling, deepening, enlarging, or casing a water bore deeper than six metres without a water bore driller's licence
- removing, replacing, altering, or repairing the casing, lining or screen of a water bore deeper than six metres, other than a subartesian bore casing less than 1.2 metres below the surface, without a water bore driller's licence

- decommissioning a water bore deeper than six metres without a water bore driller's licence
- contravening a condition of a water bore driller's licence—the conditions of a water bore driller's licence are explained in this handbook, and include doing work in accordance with relevant water bore construction standards
- undertaking water bore drilling work of a class, or requiring an endorsement, without an appropriate licence
- advertising in relation to water bore drilling work in a false or misleading way
- advertising a willingness to undertake water bore drilling work without an appropriate licence.

These offences do not apply if the water bore is being drilled under the petroleum legislation in accordance with the 'Code of Practice for Constructing and Abandoning Coal Seam Gas Wells in Queensland'.

Other water bore drilling offences under the Water Act (maximum 50 penalty units) include:

- a licensed water bore driller failing to produce their licence for inspection by an authorised officer
- failing to return a cancelled, suspended, or expired water bore driller's licence to the department
- failing to keep a drill log of drilling activities
- failing to send the department a copy of the drill log within 60 business days of commencing drilling of the water bore.

## **17 Amending, suspending or cancelling a water bore driller's licence**

The Water Act sets out processes by which the department can, under certain circumstances, make changes to water bore driller's licences, without the consent of the licensee. These processes may attract natural justice principles of procedural fairness whereby the licence holder is given notice of a proposed change and the opportunity to argue their case against it in a written submission.

The department must then consider the matters raised by the licensee in any properly made submission concerning the proposed change and either inform the licensee (via an information notice) of any change to their licence or inform that the proposed change to the licence has not occurred.

Any licensed water bore driller receiving an information notice under the Water Act from the department may appeal the decision in the Magistrates Court.

The situations in which the Water Act allows the department to amend, suspend or cancel water bore driller's licenses include the following:

- the licence can be amended if the department is satisfied a licence holder is no longer competent to carry out the water bore drilling activities for which they are licensed
- the licence can be suspended (for a set period—after which time it must be reinstated) if the licence holder has:
  - been convicted of an offence against the Water Act or similar interstate law

- carried out water bore drilling activities not permitted under the class of licence they hold
- failed to comply with the conditions of a water bore driller's licence
- failed to supply the department with a drill log for a water bore within 60 business days of commencing drilling of a water bore
- the licence can be cancelled (without future reinstatement) if:
  - the licence was issued in error or as a result of a false or misleading declaration or representation
  - the licence holder
    - has been convicted of an offence against the Water Act or similar interstate law
    - carried out water bore drilling activities not permitted under the licence
    - has failed to comply with the conditions of a water bore driller's licence.

## 18 Overview of licensee skills

This section provides an overview of the skills that a licensed driller will hold.

### 18.1 Class 1 skills and knowledge

A class 1 licensed driller must have the following skills and knowledge:

- **Workplace health and safety**—knows relevant workplace health and safety requirements for operation of drilling plant and use of bore construction materials.
- **Siting a bore**—understands potential sources of contamination for water bores; can site a bore to prevent contamination and to minimise interference with other bores.
- **Straightness and plumbness of a bore**—sets up a rig and uses appropriate techniques to keep bores within reasonable limits of straightness and plumbness.
- **Drilling**—uses the correct drilling equipment and method for a given task; selects rotation speed and annular velocities for rotary plants and tool selection and plant operation for cable tool rigs.
- **Fishing**—maintains tool string inventories; understands fishing tools and procedures for their use.
- **Formation sampling and description**—collects, describes and labels strata samples and water samples.
- **Bore design**—design bores in single aquifer systems with emphasis on sealing out poorer quality waters and contamination from the surface.
- **Construction**—selects appropriate bore casing with due regard for the limits and uses of different casing types. Seats and seals the casing in a bore.
- **Cementing**—undertakes and understands basic cementing techniques and hole cementing volume calculations.

- **Setting screens and stabilising gravel fill**—selects the appropriate slot size, screen length and diameter; installs screens and places stabilising gravel fill into a bore.
- **Bore development and disinfection procedures**—develops and disinfects bores using basic procedures.
- **Aquifer tests and water sampling**—carries out tests to estimate bore yield; measures static water level and drawdown.
- **Decommissioning**—plans for and selects appropriate materials for decommissioning test holes and abandoned water bores in single aquifer systems.
- **Drill logs**—correctly completes drill log forms.

## 18.2 Class 2 skills and knowledge

An applicant for a class 2 licence must have the basic knowledge and skills held by a class 1 driller and the following skills and knowledge:

- **Bore design**—designs and constructs bores in multiple aquifer systems, including subartesian bores in artesian sediments, with an emphasis on methods to exclude unsuitable waters from the bore and prevent intermixing of waters from aquifers with different water quality or standing water levels. Knows about the use of inert casing materials.
- **Construction**—selects appropriate bore casing with due regard for the limitations and uses of different casing types. Seats and seals the casing in a bore.
- **Cementing**—understands hole preparation, casing installation and circulation requirements for cementing; able to calculate hole volumes, grout volumes and the specific gravity of grout; understands the effect of cement additives to grout; able to grout in casing and plug selected zones in a bore and correctly complete a bore cementing report for a subartesian bore.
- **Aquifer tests**—measures static water level, drawdown and bore yield; carries out pumping tests thereby determining the safe pumping capacity of bores at different drawdown levels.
- **Decommissioning**—selects appropriate materials and method for decommissioning test holes and abandoned water bores in multiple aquifer systems.
- **Drill logs**—correctly completes drill log forms.

## 18.3 Class 3 skills and knowledge

An applicant for a class 3 licence must have the basic knowledge and skills held by class 2 drillers and the following skills and knowledge:

- **Drilling fluids**—understands methods, procedures and calculations required for mixing, measuring and controlling drilling fluids to provide formation stability and artesian fluid pressure control in a borehole.
- **Cementing**—understands methods, procedures and calculations required for pressure-cementing artesian bores; correctly completes a bore cementing report for an artesian bore.

- **Bore design**—understands requirements for drilling bores in artesian aquifer systems; understands requirements for designing bores in artesian sediments and corrosive water areas including the use and cementing of inert plastic and other non-ferrous casing.
- **Aquifer tests**—understands procedures for conducting flow recession and static tests on artesian bores.
- **Decommissioning**—designs and selects appropriate materials and procedures for decommissioning of test holes and abandoned artesian bores.
- **Drill logs**—correctly completes drill log forms.

## 19 Qualifications and experience required for a licence

Applicants must have the required qualifications and experience as set out in legislation and described in this handbook, before they apply for a water bore driller's licence. Successful completion of the following courses and examinations can be used to demonstrate that a driller has some of the required qualifications and experience for a licence. Similar courses may be accepted at the department's discretion. Drillers should check with the department before commencing such courses, to ensure their validity for water bore driller's licencing purposes.

- **Drilling Industry Certification and Training (DICAT) course**
  - Conducted by the ADIA, this course provides knowledge and skills training for all types of drilling and equipment.
- **Licence class exams:**
  - The ADIA conducts examinations for all three classes of driller's licences.
  - NUDLC prepared bore driller's licence examinations.
- **Drilling method endorsement exams**
  - The ADIA conducts examinations for the drilling method endorsements.
- **Drilling fluids course (optional)**
  - This course, offered by ADIA, deals with the management of drilling fluids—an essential skill for artesian drilling.
- **Screens and gravel packing course (optional)**
  - Conducted by ADIA, this course deals with the skills necessary to design and construct gravel pack bores. It also covers the sieve analysis of formation material, screen selection and bore development.
- **Other qualifications**
  - The department may accept other qualifications as equivalent to those listed above.

## 20 Obtaining a driller's licence

Several combinations of experience and qualifications can support a licence application. Generally, qualifications reduce the need for experience. Options are listed below.



## **21 Class 1 licences**

### **21.1 Option 1**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 1 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 1 exam conducted by the ADIA
- six bores drilled under the supervision of a licensed driller
- twelve months employment operating drilling machinery or using non-drilling rig methods under the supervision of a driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

### **21.2 Option 2**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 1 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 1 exam conducted by the ADIA
- DICAT course conducted by the ADIA
- six bores drilled under the supervision of a licensed driller
- six months employment operating drilling machinery or using non-drilling rig methods under the supervision of a driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

### **21.3 Option 3**

This involves compulsory on-site assessment of drilling and grouting skills—for entry of non-water bore drillers to the licencing system.

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 1 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 1 exam conducted by the ADIA
- twelve months employment operating drilling machinery or using non-drilling rig methods during which time at least six bores or holes intersecting underground water were drilled or dug.

## **22 Class 2 licences**

### **22.1 Option 1**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 2 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 2 exam conducted by the ADIA
- twelve months employment as a class 1 driller

- six class 1 bores and three class 2 bores, drilled under the supervision of a class 2 or 3 driller, licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

## **22.2 Option 2**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 2 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 2 exam conducted by the ADIA
- twelve months employment in the operation of a drilling machine
- at least six bores for which a class 1 licence is required and three class 2 bores, drilled under the supervision of a class 2 or 3 driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

## **22.3 Option 3**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 2 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 2 exam conducted by the ADIA
- DICAT course conducted by the ADIA
- six months employment in the operation of a drilling machine
- at least six bores for which a class 1 licence is required and three class 2 bores, drilled under the supervision of a class 2 or 3 driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

## **22.4 Option 4**

This involves compulsory on-site assessment of drilling and grouting skills—for entry of non-water bore drillers to the licencing system.

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 2 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 2 exam conducted by the ADIA
- twelve months employment operating drilling machinery other than in water bore drilling activities during which time at least nine bores or boreholes intersecting multiple aquifer systems were drilled.

## **23 Class 3 licences**

### **23.1 Option 1**

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 3 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 3 exam conducted by the ADIA

- twelve months employed as a Class 2 and in the operation of a drilling machine for 24 months.
- six class 2 bores and three class 3 bores, drilled under the supervision of a class 3 driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

## 23.2 Option 2

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 3 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 3 exam conducted by the ADIA
- DICAT course conducted by the ADIA
- twelve months employment as a Class 2 driller and in the operation of a drilling machine for 12 months
- six class 2 bores and three class 3 bores, under the supervision of a class 3 driller licensed with the appropriate endorsements.

## 23.3 Option 3

This involves compulsory on-site assessment of drilling and grouting skills—for entry of non-water bore drillers to the licencing system.

Drillers must successfully complete:

- class 3 exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department
- class 3 exam conducted by the ADIA
- 24 months employment operating drilling machinery other than in water bore drilling activities during which time at least nine bores or boreholes intersecting an aquifer with artesian pressure were drilled.

## 24 Application process

For a new licence, upgrade or amendment, applicants must:

1. obtain the necessary qualification and the necessary experience (as set out in legislation and described in this handbook)
2. email [drillers.licensing@dnrme.qld.gov.au](mailto:drillers.licensing@dnrme.qld.gov.au) to obtain a water bore driller's licence kit which contains:
  - an application form for a water bore driller's licence
  - a copy of the Water Act examination and notes
  - enrolment forms for ADIA examinations
  - a copy of this handbook
  - copies of water bore construction standards
  - an explanation of the required fees and the application process

3. complete the ADIA examinations and forward to ADIA for assessment
4. lodge an application including the required attachments by sending the information to the address stated on the driller's licence application checklist. This checklist is included within the driller's licence application kit. Attachments to the application must include:
  - a passport-sized photo of the applicant
  - certificates of any courses successfully completed
  - the completed Water Act examination
  - copies of the required drill logs completed by the applicant
  - two references:
    - one from a client
    - one from the applicant's employer
  - the application fee.

## 25 Licence renewal applications

Licensees are responsible for ensuring that licences are current and it is recommended that renewal applications be completed well before licences expire. New licences are issued for 10 years and may be renewed for 10 years

To renew a licence, the licensee must:

- Complete the form 'Application to renew a water bore driller's licence' (W2F022) which can be found on the department's website.
- Lodge the application form and application fee by sending the information to the address stated on the driller's licence expiry notification letter.

## 26 Assessment of applications

Completed applications and supporting documents will be assessed according to the requirements of the type of licence sought. The department may seek advice from the Drillers Licencing Review Committee about the suitability of an applicant for a particular licence when assessing applications.

In addition to the written application, the department may require further information and a departmental officer may also contact the applicant to arrange for further evaluation. This may involve interviews, written tests, on-site assessment of the driller's skills, or other assessments, as explained below.

## 27 Licensed driller supervision

In obtaining the necessary qualifications and experience (as set out in legislation and described in this handbook) the applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have worked under direction of a competent driller, i.e. a licensed driller who has held the relevant class of water bore driller's licence for more than two years.

## 28 New licences and licence upgrades

Applicants for new licences or upgrades to existing licences will be assessed on the following:

- performance in the Water Act examination
- relevant drill logs from previously drilled bores
- an interview with a departmental officer, which includes a written test, evaluating the applicant's ability to apply drilling knowledge and their understanding of the relevant Queensland legislation
- an on-site assessment of the applicant's skills and knowledge. This is mandatory in some situations (as outlined earlier in this handbook for non-water bore drillers applying based on their experience outside the water bore drilling sector). In other cases an on-site assessment is only undertaken when the department considers the applicant will be able to demonstrate their skills in a way that has not become evident through the interview and written testing process)
- other discretionary information such as comments from previous clients and employers about the applicant's work.

### 28.1 Applications from interstate licensed drillers

Interstate drillers applying for equivalent Queensland licences will be assessed on the following:

- if they hold the relevant class of water bores driller's licence
- performance in the Water Act examination
- relevant drill logs from previously drilled bores which meet the current construction standards
- successful completion of the NUDLC examination which evaluates the applicant's ability to apply drilling knowledge and their understanding of the relevant Queensland legislation (where the applicant did not undertake such an examination when applying for their interstate licence)
- any other discretionary information such as comments from previous clients and employers about the applicant's work.

### 28.2 Applications from overseas licensed drillers

Overseas licensed drillers cannot work in Queensland as a water bore driller unless they have a Queensland water bore driller's licence. To obtain a Queensland water bore driller's licence applicants must:

- complete the Water Act examination
- pass the relevant ADIA examination for the class of licence and endorsements
- demonstrate the necessary experience for operating a drilling machine
- undertake a mandatory on-site assessment

- pass the relevant exam prepared by the NUDLC and administered by the department.

## 28.3 Deciding an application

In deciding an application, the department will either:

- grant the application in full—the successful applicant will receive their new licence by post
- grant part of the application—the applicant will receive their new licence by post with an information notice outlining the department's reasons for refusing part of the application
- refuse the application in full—the applicant will receive an information notice outlining the department's reasons for refusal.

Applicants who are dissatisfied with an outcome can appeal by way of an application for internal review. An application for internal review must be made within 30 business days after the applicant has been given the information notice about the decision, using the approved form 'Application for review of an original decision' (W2F025) located on the Business and Industry portal at [www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au). If an applicant is still dissatisfied after an internal review decision is made, then the applicant may apply for an external review in compliance with the *Queensland Civil Administration Tribunal Act 2009*. Alternatively, an administrative review and appeal may be made to the Land Court whilst judicial review is available through application to the Supreme Court.

## 29 Licencing offices

For further information or clarification on driller's licencing, email [drillers.licensing@dnrme.qld.gov.au](mailto:drillers.licensing@dnrme.qld.gov.au). For details of local departmental offices visit the department's website at [www.dnrme.qld.gov.au](http://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au).