



DRINKING WATER IN CHILD CARE CENTERS & SCHOOLS

SOUTH CAROLINA

State Policy Profile

Access to safe and appealing drinking water in child care and schools is a key strategy to build healthy habits that children will use for life to maintain a healthy body weight and to support overall health.

RESEARCH METHODS: This issue brief summarizes state-level policies that govern drinking water access and quality in licensed child care centers and public school buildings. Findings reflect laws and regulations in effect as of June 2017. The following state-level policies were reviewed for relevant provisions:

- Child care licensing regulations
- School building standards
- School nutrition standards
- School sanitation standards
- School facilities inventory requirements
- School joint purchasing provisions
- Food safety codes
- Plumbing codes
- Childhood lead poisoning prevention program regulations

CHILD CARE CENTERS

Access to Drinking Water

Is there a general state policy requiring that children be provided drinking water?

Yes. As a condition of licensing, child care centers are generally required to make “safe drinking water” available to children “at all times.”¹ Toddlers “shall be offered water routinely throughout the day.”²

How many drinking fountains are required?

One drinking fountain per 100 occupants. South Carolina has adopted the 2015 International Plumbing Code and requires 1 drinking fountain per 100 child care center occupants.³ Water dispensers can substitute for up to fifty percent of the required number of fountains.⁴ Water dispensers are defined as plumbing fixtures that are “manually controlled by the user for the purpose of dispensing potable drinking water into a receptacle such as a cup, glass or bottle,” and can be plumbed or “not connected to the potable water distribution system and...supplied with potable water from a container, bottle or reservoir.”⁵

Are there requirements for drinking fountain maintenance and cleanliness?

Yes. Drinking fountains “shall be of an angle-jet design, maintained in good repair and kept sanitary.”⁶

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of taps and fountains used to supply drinking water required?

No

How is the child care center water supply addressed?

A licensed child care center’s water Supply must meet applicable requirements for water quality and testing in accordance with Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).⁷

How is water quality from a private water supply, e.g. a well, monitored?

As a condition of licensing, child care centers with a private well “shall obtain approval pursuant to DHEC to ensure safe location, construction, and proper maintenance and operation of the system.”⁸

Are there any provisions relevant to water filters applicable to child care centers?

No

Does the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water at child care centers?

No. The South Carolina Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Act does not include drinking water as a lead hazard subject to testing and remediation.⁹

SCHOOLS

Access to Drinking Water

Does state school nutrition policy address access to drinking water at no cost to students?

No

Are cups for drinking water required in food service areas?

No

Can school food service purchase drinking water supplies like cups through a purchasing collaborative?

Yes. South Carolina law permits school districts to conduct collaborative purchasing.¹⁰

What are the requirements for drinking fountains in schools?

The South Carolina Department of Education's 2014 South Carolina School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide (Facilities Guide) applies the 2012 International Plumbing Code to school buildings.¹¹ The 2012 IPC requires a minimum of 1 drinking fountain per 100 building occupants in educational occupancies and allows water coolers or bottled water dispensers to substitute for up to 50 percent of the required number of drinking fountains.¹²

The Facilities Guide also requires the following for drinking water access when planning school buildings:

- Water coolers or an alternate source of free water is required in all cafeterias serving free or reduced meals.
- Gymnasium and auditorium lobbies must have a minimum of one fountain/cooler located in each area.
- Bi-level water coolers must be counted as one fixture for fixture count purposes.¹³

Water Quality

Is routine water quality testing of taps and fountains that convey drinking water required?

No

Is plumbing system maintenance in general regulated?

Yes, in food service areas. The South Carolina Food Code requires that plumbing systems are maintained in good repair.¹⁴

How is the school water supply addressed?

The South Carolina Food Code requires the water supply used for food service is obtained from “an approved source that is: (A) An existing public water system (e.g., municipality). (B) A new public water system (including a well) constructed for the purpose of serving the retail food establishment that is constructed, maintained, and operated according to R.61-58, State Primary Drinking Water Regulation.”¹⁵ If the water supply “does not meet acceptable standards for drinking water consumption, the retail food establishment shall immediately cease its food operation.”¹⁶

How is water quality from a private water supply, e.g. a well, monitored?

Under the Food Code, drinking water from a well must meet federal and state drinking water quality regulations,¹⁷ sampled at least annually,¹⁸ and water quality records must be maintained.¹⁹

Are there any provisions relevant to water filters?

Yes, in food service areas. Water filters used for drinking water used for food service must be made of safe materials,²⁰ replaceable,²¹ and “be scheduled for

inspection and service, in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions and as necessary to prevent device failure based on local water conditions.”²² Records “demonstrating inspection and service shall be maintained.”²³

Does the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program address potential exposure to lead in drinking water at schools?

No

Information Gathering Systems

Does South Carolina conduct a statewide school facilities inventory?

South Carolina law requires that every three years the State Board of Education submits a report to the South Carolina General Assembly of the projected five-year school facilities improvement requirements reported by school districts, the needs identified since the last report, and those previously identified needs addressed since the last report.²⁴ The needs survey is cost focused and does not collect detailed building information.²⁵

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For additional information please visit www.phaionline.org for the summary report: **Developing State Policy Recommendations for Safe Drinking Water Procurement in Child Care Centers and Schools**

¹ S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 114-507(A)(6)(d) (2016).

² S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 114-509(A)(3)(h) (2016).

³ S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 8-800 (2016).

⁴ 2015 Int’l Plumbing Code § 410.4.

⁵ 2015 Int’l Plumbing Code § 202.

⁶ S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 114-507(A)(6)(e) (2016).

⁷ S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 114-507(A)(6)(a) (2016).

⁸ S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 114-507(A)(6) (2016).

⁹ S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-1320 (2017).

¹⁰ **S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-4810 (2017).**

¹¹ S.C. Dept. of Educ., Off. of School Facilities, 2014 South Carolina School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide 1-8, <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-planning-building/south-carolina-school-facilities-planning-construction-guides/> (last accessed July 19, 2017).

¹² 2012 Int'l Plumbing Code § **410.3**; **Table 403.1 (2012)**.

¹³ S.C. Dept. of Educ., Off. of School Facilities, 2014 South Carolina School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide 4-3, <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-planning-building/south-carolina-school-facilities-planning-construction-guides/> (last accessed July 19, 2017).

¹⁴ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-205.15 (2014).

¹⁵ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-101.11 (2014).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § **5-102.11 (2014)**.

¹⁸ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-102.13 (2014).

¹⁹ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-102.14 (2014).

²⁰ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-201.11 (2014).

²¹ S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-202.15 (2014).

²² S.C. Code Regs. 61-25, Ch. 5, § 5-205.13 (2014).

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ S.C. Code Ann. § 59-144-130 (2017)

²⁵ S.C. Dept. of Educ., Off. of School Facilities, Statewide School District Facilities Capital Needs Analysis (Dec. 2016), <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-planning-building/school-facility-building-funds/> (last accessed July 19, 2017).