

**Hawaii Department of Health Clean Water Branch  
Monitoring and Analysis Section**

**Data Acceptance Criteria**

Data submitted to HIDOH Clean Water Branch (CWB) for the purpose of assessing state water quality may be used to fulfill various federal Clean Water Act requirements. Decisions and conclusions resulting from the data submitted to CWB can have broad and long-standing implications to the state water quality program. It is therefore imperative that only data of known and acceptable quality be used to assess waters for conformance with state water quality standards. Data of known and acceptable quality, also known as credible data, can be assured through a series of defined and systematic activities applied throughout the planning and data generating process. The elements listed below constitute the minimum requirements for data acceptance by the CWB for water quality assessment purposes. These elements help to assure that the data ultimately used by the CWB are known, credible, scientifically valid, and defensible, collectively referred to as “valid data.” Data not meeting these requirements may not be used for state water quality assessments; however, may be used for other non-regulatory purposes.

1. All data submittals, to the extent feasible, should be in electronic format that is PC compatible, preferably in Office 2010 (or later) or PDF format. References to web sites will not be accepted in lieu of actual data submitted.
2. All data must be submitted in the units of measurement specified in HAR 11-54<sup>1</sup>.
3. To expedite processing, all data and information submitted for consideration in the State’s biennial Integrated Report should include a completed Integrated Report Data Submittal Information form containing the following information:
  - a. Name and contact information of person or organization submitting data and information certifying the completeness and accuracy of the data and information
  - b. Date of submission
  - c. Whether Geographical Information System (GIS) data files (ArcGis mxd or ArcView shapefiles) are included
  - d. Parameters (pollutants) for the submitted data
  - e. HAR 11-54 waterbody classifications for which data are being reported
  - f. Date range or time period of data
  - g. Starting and ending dates of when data was collected, or time period which the submitted information represents
  - h. Brief summary of submittal or list of submittal contents and any instructions required for assessment, which may include:
    - i. Definitions for codes or abbreviations used
    - ii. Whether additional summaries or instructions are attached to the cover sheet or where they are included in the submittal
  - i. Whether electronic or hard copy/paper format is being submitted

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/files/2013/04/Clean\\_Water\\_Branch\\_HAR\\_11-54\\_20141115.pdf](https://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/files/2013/04/Clean_Water_Branch_HAR_11-54_20141115.pdf)

4. A minimum of 30 samples per decision unit or watershed over a two-year period is required to assess water quality in the State's Integrated Report. Assessments will be made for pollutants listed in HAR 11-54. The CWB will accept all valid data from individual submitters (including those submissions with less than 30 samples). All valid data may be assessed collectively for a decision unit or watershed. To be considered of sufficient quantity and quality to be used as a primary line of evidence in assessing water quality standards attainment, data being submitted should contain the following:
  - a. A minimum of 30 samples per decision unit or waterbody. If less than 30 samples are received from all submitters, the decision unit or waterbody may not be assessed. However, the data may be used by the CWB for other purposes.
  - b. Data submitted to the CWB to be included in the Integrated Report should have been collected within the two-year date range stated in the CWB call for data (unless the data is part of a continuous study showing historical trend). Note that data collected prior to the start of the CWB date range may not necessarily be used in the Integrated Report but may be used for other purposes.
  - c. The location of the water body and monitoring sites, including:
    - i. GIS metadata with detail of all parameters of the projection including datum
    - ii. The name and exact area of the water body and monitoring sites the information concerns, including:
      1. Very clear electronic copy indicating the area the information pertains to (*e.g.* mark sample location on a USGS topographic map), and,
      2. The latitude/longitude and datum of the location
  - d. Metadata for the field and laboratory data, including:
    - i. Name of sampler, date and time of all sample collection and field measurements
    - ii. Location of the specific field measurements or sample collection (unique site code, latitude and longitude) within the water body
    - iii. Pollutant or condition measured
    - iv. Number of samples collected, or field measurements made
    - v. Name of laboratory, if applicable
    - vi. Analyses performed, including date, time, and analyst
    - vii. Units of measurement
    - viii. Analytical methods (name and method number, if applicable) and detection limits
    - ix. Other relevant factors such as data auditing confirmation (data audit/assessment results), field notes, laboratory comments or notations concerning deviations from standard procedures, including Quality Assurance/Quality Control factors that may affect data reliability, validity or interpretation
  - e. Supporting or associated analytical data (*e.g.* hardness data with dissolved metals samples, temperature and pH data with ammonia measurements)
5. Quality Assurance must be documented

- a. All sample collection and field measurements must be made under the guidance of an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) or equivalent quality assurance document (see EPA Quality Assurance Project Plan Development Tool <https://www.epa.gov/quality/quality-assurance-project-plan-development-tool>) for more information.
    - i. The QAPP or equivalent quality assurance document must be developed by the submitting organization and signed by the highest authority in the organization and the person responsible for quality assurance in the organization.
  - b. An electronic copy of the QAPP must be submitted to CWB Monitoring and Analysis Section for review prior to data acceptance.
    - i. Data submitted prior to approval of a QAPP may be excluded from water quality assessments.
    - ii. Data not accepted for water quality assessment may be used for other purposes.
6. Laboratory analyses
- a. The person or organization submitting data to the CWB is responsible for all data that they submit including the data generated by their laboratories and is responsible for submitting all pertinent laboratory information specified in this document.
  - b. Laboratories performing analyses must be certified in good standing<sup>2</sup> by a nationally recognized accreditation body (such as NELAP, or A2LA) for the analyses that are being reported, or
  - c. The laboratory must participate in, and demonstrate satisfactory performance in, annual proficiency testing for all parameters being reported. Proficiency tests must be conducted by an accredited, independent proficiency testing provider. All performance evaluation results must be submitted directly to the CWB by the test provider, and,
  - d. All laboratories performing analyses must submit to the CWB for evaluation Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the analytes being reported (submitted), and,
  - e. All laboratories performing chemical analyses must submit validation studies to the CWB for each analyte being reported for evaluation prior to data acceptance.
    - i. Data submitted prior to the acceptance of the validation studies may be excluded from water quality assessments.
    - ii. All issues identified in the validation studies must be resolved prior to data acceptance. Data submitted prior to resolution of validation issues may be excluded from water quality assessments.
    - iii. Data not accepted for water quality assessment purposes may be used for other purposes.
7. Narrative and qualitative submittals
- a. Narrative and qualitative submittals must:

---

<sup>2</sup> All certification/accreditation reports must be submitted to CWB

- i. Identify the name and exact area of the water body, as described in 4d above
- ii. Provide detailed description and documentation of the monitoring sites
- iii. Include photographic documentation as supporting evidence, where applicable
- iv. Provide detailed description and documentation of the monitoring/measurement methods used. EPA or industry-standard methods must be used
- v. Identify the date(s) that the data were collected and dates that the assessments were made.
- vi. Describe events or conditions (or provide documentation) that indicate impacts on water quality
- vii. Demonstrate and document that the narrative and qualitative information being submitted adequately represents the water body being studied for the period in which they are submitted
- viii. Include documentation of the analyst's credentials, including training, and proficiency documentation for the parameters being reported (this should be included in the QAPP)
- ix. Provide a linkage between the measurement endpoint and the water quality standard of interest
  - x. Be scientifically defensible
  - xi. Be verifiable by HIDOH CWB
- b. Assessments without supporting documentation may not be used for decision making purposes

Raw data, including instrument QC data (including, but not limited to, calibration data, control charts, spiked sample results, and maintenance records), complete field notes (including climate and information related to water flow, field conditions or documented sources of pollution) must be made available to CWB upon request to facilitate data credibility and assessment review. Raw data are defined as any original factual information from a measurement activity or study recorded in a laboratory notebook, worksheets, records, memoranda, notes, or exact copies thereof that are necessary for the reconstruction and evaluation of the report of the activity or study. Raw data may include photography, microfilm or microfiche copies, computer/instrument printouts, magnetic or digital media, including dictated observations, and recorded data from automated instruments. If exact copies of raw data have been prepared (and verified accurate by signature) then the exact copy or exact transcript may be substituted.

Data submissions not meeting these requirements may be excluded from water quality assessment purposes.

All data submitted will become public domain and may be used for any appropriate purpose identified by the CWB.