

## Encyclopedia & Glossary of Water Terms

- **Acid Rain:** Rainfall that has turned acidic due to the burning of various fossil fuels and atmospheric waste gases like sulfur and nitrogen oxides. In simple terms, it is rain that can cause damage to the environment and ecosystem.
- **Aqueduct:** An artificial channel or canal created by man to transport water from the source to place of use.
- **Aquifer:** An underground layer of permeable rock or body where water gets stored and can be extracted or transmitted.
- **Backfill:** The pile of sand, dirt, stones and other debris that you get when you dig up the ground. This can be used to refill the holes.
- **Boiling Point:** The temperature at which liquids boil and convert to vapor. Water turns to vapor at 212 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Buoyancy:** Defined as the force that enables objects to stay afloat in water or other liquids.
- **Calibration:** The comparison and correction of measurements on a valve, gauge or other such instruments based on the standard measurements set on the base or control instrument.
- **Combined Sewer:** A system used to collect used indoor water from businesses and residences as well as outdoor water from rain, sprinkler systems, and more.
- **Dam:** A structure that is used to store water and restrict its flow.
- **Desalination:** The removing of excess salt and minerals from seawater.
- **Drainage Basin:** An area of land, usually low lying, where water is collected as a result of an overflow from the boundary or wall containing it.
- **Estuaries:** Points where a river or stream meets the sea.
- **Evaporation Ponds:** Artificial ponds with a large surface area so that water can evaporate quickly. These ponds are used to extract minerals from the water. Sometimes, artificial methods are used to make the process faster.
- **Field Capacity:** Refers to the maximum amount of water a particular soil can hold.
- **Flood Plain:** A flat low lying area next to a river or stream that gets flooded when there is heavy rain.
- **Gaging Station:** An area next to a water body like a river or stream where samples are taken for testing by scientists.
- **Groundwater Runoff:** When water enters the ground directly instead of going to a containment or treatment plant, it is known as groundwater runoff.
- **Heavy Water:** Water that is changed to contain more hydrogen isotope deuterium than regular water. It's used mainly in nuclear reactors.
- **Hydroelectricity:** Generation of electricity through the flow of water. Turbine generators are placed near dams, reservoirs or areas where water can be controlled to generate electricity.
- **Irrigation Water:** Used for agricultural purposes, the water is pumped or directed via channels from its location to the crops.
- **Light Water Reactor:** A thermal reactor that uses light water i.e. water with normal deuterium oxide instead of heavy water.
- **Meltwater:** When ice or snow from the glacier melts due to sunlight, it is known as meltwater.
- **Municipal Sewage:** <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/msrhome.html>
- **Outwash:** A deposit of sand and other debris along the glacier carried by meltwater.
- **Passive Solar Water Heater:** A device used to heat water by exposure to direct sunlight.
- **Percolation:** The filtering and movement of water through a porous material.
- **Polluted:** Refers to water which has been infiltrated with harmful or toxic matters, thereby rendering it undrinkable and unusable.
- **Rain Gauge:** An instrument that is used to collect and measure rainwater by meteorologists.
- **Removal Action:** Removal of toxins or other such hazardous materials as may be present in water. This is an extreme measure taken during emergencies.
- **Reservoir:** A body of water, natural or manmade, which supplies water to community or town around it.
- **Sediment:** Solid particles found in water that are broken down by weathering and transported by the water itself. These particles eventually settle at the bottom of the water body.

- [Stream Segment](#): Refers to a part of a stream which is put under observation for research and further development.
- [Stream Flow](#): Describes the flow of water in rivers or streams.
- [Thermal Pollution](#): The pollution of water by an electrical power generation systems or similar systems that use heated water.
- [Toxicity](#): The degree to which a substance becomes harmful or toxic to the human body.
- [Wastewater](#): Water that cannot be used for any purpose so it's better disposed.
- [Water Pollution](#): Refers to the contamination of a water body due to the introduction of any foreign substance or material in the water.
- [Water Wheel](#): An instrument in the form of a wheel used to generate hydropower on a small scale to machinery nearby.
- [Wet Cooling](#): Refers to the process that reduces heat by using the natural method of evaporation.
- [Zone of Saturation](#): An area below the water table where all the pores are filled with water. It varies depending on the seasons.

## Water Cycle

The water cycle refers to the continuous and natural flow of water starting from the clouds, through different stages, finally joining the clouds again. Water from the clouds enters the ground through precipitation as rain, snow or hail. Then, it joins the river and the sea. Due to evaporation, the seawater is converted into vapor which joins the clouds. It's a never ending cycle. Evaporation can happen at any point when the water travels and exposed to sunlight.

- [Animated Water Cycle](#): Animated presentation of the water cycle.
- [The Water Cycle](#): Detailed description of the water cycle.
- [Activities](#): Go through these activities to learn about the process of water cycle.
- [Hydrologic Cycle](#): Explains the hydrologic cycle with diagrams and concise descriptions.
- [The Global Water Cycle](#): The program by the US Global Change Research Program to study the role of the water cycle in global climate change and variability.