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05 December 2025

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2025074650

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 26 October 2025 for information regarding community water fluoridation.

As noted in the Ministry's email on Monday 24 November 2025, your request seeks information which is held by several other agencies and local authorities. The Ministry extended the period of time available to respond to your request under section 15A of the Act, as the consultations necessary to make a decision on the request are such that a response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit. The Ministry would like to apologise for any delay and any inconvenience caused.

On the 26 November 2025, the Ministry transferred several parts of your request to several agencies under section 14(b)(i) of the Act. This included questions 3, 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20 to the Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai, question 10 to NZ Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi and question 18 to WorkSafe.

The Ministry also notes your request seeks information which is both held by, and more closely connected to the functions of, several local authorities. The Ministry has consulted 32 local authorities to assess what information they hold in relation to your request. This has been in order to transfer the relevant parts of your request to these local authorities under section 12 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and section 14 of the Official Information Act (OIA).

Please refer to the transfer letter, dated 5 December 2025, which outlines the transfers the Ministry has issued to the relevant local authorities for information they hold.

Please find a response to each part of your request below.

A. Supply & Production

- 1. Identify the factory/facility where the fluoride chemicals supplied to New Zealand water systems are produced, including location, operator, and production process. Include all applicable laws, regulations, licenses, and international standards governing manufacture.*
 - 2. Identify all upstream raw material suppliers, including chemical sources such as phosphate rock suppliers, and any subcontracted labs or blending facilities.*
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3. Provide the full chemical composition, including chemical names, chemical formulae, and concentrations of all fluoride compounds added to the public water supply.
4. Provide all Safety Data Sheets (SDS), production records, and toxicology studies related to the fluoride chemicals supplied.
5. Provide details of any chemical by-products, waste, or residues generated during production, storage, transport, or dosing, including their environmental and human health impacts.
6. Disclose all corporate entities, owners, and shareholders that profit from the manufacture or sale of fluoride chemicals in New Zealand.
7. Clarify whether New Zealand currently manufactures fluoride chemicals domestically, imports ready-made fluoride chemicals, or both, including details of manufacturers and import sources.

B. Transport & Logistics

8. List all companies involved in transporting fluoride chemicals from production sites to distributors, councils, and water treatment facilities. Include freight, shipping, and air transport entities.
9. Provide shipping manifests, including transport schedules, storage conditions, and handling protocols (personal driver details may be redacted).
10. Include all applicable laws, licenses, and regulatory frameworks under which these transporters operate, particularly regarding hazardous substances.

C. Contractors & Distribution

11. Identify all contractors, consultants, and water treatment personnel who handle, dose, or monitor fluoride chemicals.
12. Provide full contract details, including terms of service, duration, performance bonds, insurance coverage, and any professional certifications required.
13. Disclose all corporate structures, shareholders, and profit arrangements related to these contractors.

The Ministry does not hold any information within scope of parts 1-13 of your request. As noted in our correspondence dated 24 November, 26 November and 5 December 2025 respectively, some of the information you seek is held by other agencies subject to the OIA, as well as relevant local authorities subject to the LGOIMA.

Please refer to the two transfer letters the Ministry has issued for further details on which parts of this request will be addressed by the relevant bodies who hold parts of this information. Please note that some of this information will be held by private companies. These companies are not subject to the Act and are therefore not obligated to share information they hold.

The Ministry queried a transfer to the Environmental Protection Agency. They noted that any information they held in relation to your request is already in the public domain. They provided the following information which may be of interest to you:

Hazardous substances imported to or manufactured in New Zealand require an approval. In some cases, this approval can take the form of a Group Standard, where whole groups of substances with defined classifications and uses are approved. In the cases of substances used in the treatment of water, these could be covered by one of the Water Treatment Chemicals Group Standards 2020 – there are 8 depending on the hazard classification of the substance in question. The Group Standards identify any specific controls on using the substances and refer to the EPA Notices which put in place further requirements. The importers and manufacturers are responsible for self-assigning to the correct group standard and maintaining records of this, and the EPA does not hold these records.

The Group Standards can be found here: www.epa.govt.nz/hazardous-substances/substance-approvals-and-group-standards/group-standard-approvals/find-group-standard-approvals/.

Please note the Ministry is funding the capital costs of setting up community water fluoridation for the 14 local authorities that have been directed to fluoridate by the Director-General of Health. Ongoing costs in relation to the operation and implementation of fluoridation will be met by the local authorities.

Over 60 years of international and New Zealand research shows community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and affordable way to improve oral health.

Last year, the Ministry published a new evidence review about the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation, taking into account the latest international evidence. The review found community water fluoridation provides ongoing clear benefits even when alternative forms of fluoride (such as fluoride toothpaste) are available. You can find the evidence review here: www.health.govt.nz/publications/community-water-fluoridation-an-evidence-review.

The Ministry has published previous responses on similar topics which may be of interest to you below:

- www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-08/h2024043279_response.pdf
- www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-06/h2024042074.pdf

For other published responses on the subject of fluoridation that may be of interest to you, please refer to the following link: www.health.govt.nz/information-releases?keywords=Fluoride

D. Policy & Decision-Makers

14. List all individuals, boards, committees, and advisers who approve or recommend fluoride use in New Zealand, including councils, Ministry of Health, and public health associations.

In accordance with section 18(d) of the Act, a list of some of the organisations that endorse community water fluoridation can be found on the Ministry's website here: www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/programmes-and-initiatives/oral-health/community-water-fluoridation-policy#toc-1-4.

Please note this part of your request will be addressed by some of the local authorities. Please refer to the transfer letter(s) for further details.

15. Include all corporate affiliations, financial interests, and advisory bodies that influence decisions regarding fluoride.

E. Compliance, Oversight & Safety

16. Provide copies of all risk assessments, environmental impact statements, monitoring reports, and internal or external evaluations regarding fluoride safety, dosing, and public health.

17. Provide documentation of regulatory compliance, inspections, or audits by government or third-party authorities.

18. Disclose any incidents, complaints, or breaches relating to fluoride chemical safety, handling, or dosing.

The Ministry does not hold this information; however, it is held by the Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai. Additionally, WorkSafe holds information related to question 18. Please refer to their responses in due course.

Please note some local authorities also hold some of this information. Please refer to the transfer letter and their respective responses for further details.

F. Global Precedents & Case Studies

19. Provide documented information on countries that have ceased or restricted water fluoridation, including Germany, Sweden, Japan, Netherlands, Finland, Israel, Hungary, and the United States (Utah).

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

20. Include international case law, peer-reviewed studies, legal decisions, or environmental assessments showing health or environmental risks, chemical by-products, or public health outcomes linked to fluoride.

21. Provide references to any policy or scientific evidence considered when approving or maintaining fluoridation in New Zealand

The Ministry keeps a watching brief on the national and international evidence base. Information relating to the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation can be found on the Ministry of Health's website at: www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/programmes-and-initiatives/oral-health/community-water-fluoridation-policy

Information about the implementation of community water fluoridation in New Zealand can be found on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/programmes-and-initiatives/oral-health/implementation-of-community-water-fluoridation.

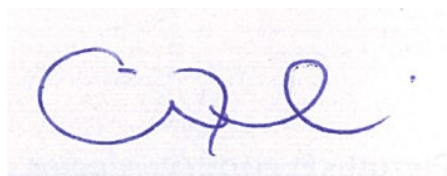
Additionally, the Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai will address question 20 in its response.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Possenniskie', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and a trailing flourish.

Clare Possenniskie
Acting Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui