
WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 18
ARTICLE 9G

WV Legislature

§18-9G-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this bill is to support maintaining a child's overall health, such as regulating temperature, transporting nutrients, and preventing disease. Drinking sufficient amounts of water can have many health benefits, such as reduced dental cavities and maintaining a healthy body weight. Studies show when water bottle filling stations are installed in schools, students nearly triple the amount of how much water they drink at lunch time and the likelihood of students in those same schools being at an unhealthy weight is greatly reduced. Additionally, studies have shown that there are more germs found on an average classroom water fountain spigot than a toilet seat or an animal cage. Accordingly, promoting the use of a water bottle filling station reduces the spread of germs and disease.

§18-9G-2. Definitions.

As used in this section these words have the following meaning:

(1) "Construction project" means a project in the furtherance of a facilities plan with a cost of greater than \$1,000,000 for the new construction, expansion, or major renovation of the facilities, buildings, and structures for school purposes, including:

(A) The acquisition of land for current or future use in connection with the construction project;

(B) New or substantial upgrading of existing equipment, machinery, or furnishings; and

(C) Installation of utilities and other similar items related to making the construction project operational.

(D) "Construction project" does not include such items as books, computers, or equipment used for instructional purposes; fuel supplies; routine utility service fees and routine maintenance costs; ordinary course of business improvements; and other items which are customarily considered to result in a current or ordinary course of business operating charge or a major improvement project.

(2) "Major improvement" means a project meeting one or more of the following:

(A) Increasing the square footage of a school by more than 5,000 square feet; or

(B) Any renovations or upgrades to a school with a cost greater than \$500,000 where plumbing work constitutes more than 20 percent of the project's construction cost.

(3) "Public school" means any school under the general supervision of the West Virginia Board of Education pursuant to section two, article XIII of the Constitution of West Virginia and includes any charter school pursuant to §18-5G-1 *et seq.* of this code.

(4) "Water bottle filling station" means a station to which the following apply:

(A) The station is designed to fill a bottle with water;

(B) The station dispenses filtered drinking water;

(C) The station may be integrated into a drinking fountain; and

(D) The station shall be touchless for sanitary reasons.

§18-9G-3. Plans for new construction and major improvements of public school buildings required to provide sufficient water bottle filling stations.

(a) The state board shall promulgate a rule pursuant to §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this code on or before November 1, 2022, to require newly constructed public school buildings to include the following:

- (1) A minimum of one water bottle filling station on each floor and wing of each public school building;
- (2) At least one water bottle filling station in all school food service areas;
- (3) At least one water bottle filling station near gymnasiums and outdoor learning and activity areas, including playgrounds and athletic facilities; and
- (4) A minimum of at least one water bottle filling station per 200 building occupants projected upon completion of the projected construction.

(b) The state board shall promulgate a rule pursuant to §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this code on or before November 1, 2022, to require existing public school buildings undergoing a major improvement to include a minimum of half of the facility's existing water coolers being retrofitted or replaced to provide water bottle filling capability and be made ADA compliant. Pending the availability of a water supply line and sanitary plumbing, the preferred placement of these stations shall be in the following areas:

- (1) School food service areas;
- (2) Near gymnasiums and outdoor learning and activity areas, including playgrounds and athletic facilities; and
- (3) Grouped toilet areas.

(c) Any water bottle filling station installed in a public school building shall:

- (1) Dispense filtered, clean drinking water;
- (2) Be touchless for sanitary reasons;
- (3) Be regularly cleaned to maintain sanitary conditions; and
- (4) Be regularly maintained to ensure proper functioning.

(d) County boards shall adopt a policy to permit students in schools with one or more water bottle filling stations to carry water bottles.