

## **A. Purpose**

This document outlines when the Ministry of Agriculture will issue a term Irrigation Certificate.

## **B. Irrigating Land With Limitations**

Land considered marginal for irrigation due to physical or chemical soil limitations such as poor drainage and/or salinity, may be suitable for a term Irrigation Certificate. By addressing the limitations through installing sub-surface drainage and using prescriptive water management practices, land reclamation can occur, at which time it may be appropriate to issue a standard Irrigation Certificate.

## **C. Land Reclamation Plan**

Clients that wish to develop an irrigation project on land with limitations are required to work with a professional (agrologist, engineer, Qualified Person, as recognized by the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, or drainage contractor) to develop a reclamation plan. A copy of the reclamation plan and documentation of completion must be provided to the ministry to determine if the limitations have been addressed satisfactorily.

## **D. Term Irrigation Certificate**

The ministry will issue a term Irrigation Certificate on land that will receive or has undergone reclamation and/or improvements to address drainage and/or salinity issues.

### **1. One Year Term Irrigation Certificate**

The ministry will issue a one-year term Irrigation Certificate where there is high confidence that the installation of sub-surface drainage will effectively improve the land limitations of salinity and water table buildup. This allows an irrigator to proceed with an irrigation development while completing the required drainage works at the same time.

Upon completion of the drainage works and irrigation development, the irrigator will notify the ministry. The ministry may conduct a site inspection or contact the drainage contractor to confirm the drainage was installed properly.

## **2. Five Year Term Irrigation Certificate**

When greater than 30 per cent of the field is affected by a severe salinity and/or drainage limitation, the installation of sub-surface drainage and implementation of prescriptive water management practices may improve the land limitations. However, uncertainty remains to the extent of the land improvement and sustainability of the project as these projects may take several years to show the reclamation was effective.

- The ministry does not offer a guarantee the land will improve over the five-year term.
- The irrigator will be responsible for monitoring the reclamation process and accepts all risk associated with the project.

Upon completion of the drainage works, the irrigator will notify the ministry. The ministry may conduct a site inspection or contact the drainage contractor to confirm the drainage was installed properly. If the ministry is satisfied the irrigation limitations have been addressed through reclamation, a five-year term Irrigation Certificate will be issued and the irrigator may proceed with the irrigation development.

## **E. Converting Term Irrigation Certificates to Full Certification**

### **One Year Term Irrigation Certificate**

One-year term Irrigation Certificates will convert to a standard full Irrigation Certificate once the ministry has conducted a site inspection confirming the drainage was installed correctly. The irrigator will be subject to the terms and conditions identified on the Irrigation Certificate.

### **Five Year Term Irrigation Certificate**

Five-year term Irrigation Certificates may convert to a standard full Irrigation Certificate after five years if there is evidence the land has improved.

- Oversight and extension advice will be provided on a routine basis to ensure mitigation measures are being taken.
- The ministry will schedule a site inspection in the fall following the fifth year of irrigation to evaluate the land condition.
- If the land has not improved or has further degraded, then additional reclamation efforts may be required before the ministry will grant another term Irrigation Certificate.

## **F. Term Irrigation Certificate Cancellation**

The ministry may cancel a term Irrigation Certificate at any time if:

- Drainage works was not installed or installed incorrectly; or
- Land damage is occurring; or
- Water service agreement or water rights license is not in place.

#### **G. Term Irrigation Certificates Non-transferable**

Term Irrigation Certificates are not transferable if the parcel of land is sold or transferred. The irrigator is required to notify the ministry of the land sale.

#### **H. Term Irrigation Certificates and Program Funding**

Projects that receive five-year term Irrigation Certificates are not eligible for any development program funding. Projects that receive a one-year term Irrigation Certificate will only be eligible to receive funding after the Irrigation Certificate converts to a full certificate.

#### **I. Authority**

*The Irrigation Act, 2019*, (effective March 20, 2020) following sections apply to these guidelines:

- Section 3-2 addresses the requirement to apply for and obtain an Irrigation Certificate.
- Section 3-3 identifies provides authority to the ministry to impose any term or condition to an Irrigation Certificate.

#### **J. General**

1. All new irrigation developments in Saskatchewan require an Irrigation Certificate.
2. An Irrigation Certificate confirms land is suitable for irrigation and no damage to the subject land or other lands will be caused by irrigating.
3. Irrigation certification protects the province's water and related land resources, as well as protecting an irrigator's significant investment in infrastructure.
4. Irrigators are responsible for ensuring that the project is constructed according to the reclamation plan and all other regulatory approvals have been obtained.
5. Five-year term Irrigation Certificates will expire on October 31<sup>st</sup> following the fifth year of irrigation.

Visit the Ministry of Agriculture [irrigation webpage](#) for more information or contact Crops and Irrigation in Outlook at 306-867-5500.