

NPDES Permitting - Do's and Don'ts

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NPDES Permitting is Complicated!

- Don't underestimate level of effort
- Get familiar with the forms
- Incomplete information causes delays
- Include a cover letter with additional details or clarification
- Don't forget your fees!

Know Your Facility

- Develop a detailed process flow diagram
- Understand production processes and how they relate to federal effluent limitation guidelines
- Verify outfall descriptions – are they appropriate?
- Are you sampling the correct location?

Sampling Parameters

- Read the instructions on the forms
- Believed present / believed absent
- Should you sample only the minimum, or sample for everything?

Stormwater Associated with Industrial Activity

- Be aware of stormwater only outfalls – do they meet the definition?
- Do you have pollutants coming on-site?
- Agencies going away from separate general permits
- EPA Multi Sector General Permit (MSGP) finding its way into state permits and may have benchmarks
- Be aware of pollution prevention requirements

Sampling

- Start early!
- Stormwater sampling has strict storm eligibility requirements
- Verify proper containers, preservatives, and holding times
- Consider multiple rounds of sampling to mitigate outliers

Consider Site Specific Water Quality Standards

- Water quality standards sometimes have options for site specific limits
- Background data
- Hardness
- Biotic Ligand Model

Data Management

- Make sure that proper method detection limits are being used
- Be sure to QA your data
- Utilize electronic data deliverables from your lab

Be Aware of Other Regulatory Programs

- Antidegradation policy
- Stream reclassifications
- Stream impairments
- TMDL

Permit Writers Can Be Your Friends!

- Talk to your permit writer if you have concerns
- Meet with them early in the renewal process to discuss your approach
- Your headaches are their headaches

Ask for a Wasteload Allocation

- Regulations continually evolve
- A fresh WLA can help identify problems and guide sampling prior to your application

Check Your Draft Carefully

- Agencies may provide pre-publication drafts for complex sites
- Read the final draft carefully
- Read the permit derivation carefully
- It is much easier to fix a problem **BEFORE** the final permit is issued!

Stakeholders

- Get copies of recently issued permits for nearby facilities
- Talk to your neighbors – were there unexpected issues or public comments on their permit?
- What are the hot button issues for environmental groups, and the local public?

Get Involved!

- Join with industry and trade associations

Call an expert

- Environmental consultants work hard to know what's going on so that you don't have to.

Questions?

Ask the panel
-or-
Contact me with questions

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