

## Does my small business need a storm water permit?

### What is storm water and why is it a concern?

Storm water runoff is rain water and snow melt that runs off the land and enters streams, rivers and lakes. Runoff from outdoor production activities or material storage areas may contain a variety of pollutants that can degrade the quality of streams and pose threats to human health.

As a small business, you can do your part to protect our waters by taking steps to prevent storm water pollution. To protect our water resources, many small businesses must obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention plans (SWP3). This fact sheet will help you determine if you need an NPDES permit and will provide you with a starting point for creating and implementing an effective SWP3.

### What is an NPDES permit?

NPDES permits intend to protect water resources by preventing various pollutants from entering lakes, streams and other bodies of water. In general, the permit lasts five years and sets limitations on what can be discharged to a lake or stream.

### Do I need an NPDES permit?

Certain small businesses are subject to Ohio EPA's storm water program based on their Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code. To determine your SIC code and whether your small business is subject to Ohio EPA's storm water program, visit U.S. EPA's website for [Industrial Activities that Require Permit Coverage](#). Regulated businesses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- paper and chemical producers;
- lumber and wood producers;
- leather tanning and finishing industries;
- stone, clay, glass and concrete producers;
- fabricated metal operations (except producers of machinery and transportation equipment);
- mineral industries;
- material recyclers such as junkyards and metal
- scrap yards; and
- transportation facilities that have vehicle maintenance shops and equipment cleaning.

### What if I do not store materials or perform operations outside?

If raw materials, manufacturing processes and wastes are managed in ways that prevent exposure to storm water, your small business may qualify for no exposure certification and therefore not require an NPDES permit.

To apply for no exposure certification you must fill out Ohio EPA's no exposure form (EPA 4239) and mail it to Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water (DSW). To download the form and for more information on no exposure, visit Ohio EPA's [no exposure certification webpage](#).

#### **\*\* IMPORTANT \*\***

Your no exposure certification must be renewed every five years.



NPDES permits are designed to keep pollutants from industrial sites out of our streams and lakes.



This facility qualifies for a no exposure certification because material storage and processing activities are kept indoors.

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Pollution control equipment like this dust collector needs to be sheltered to qualify for the No Exposure Certification.



Raw materials like steel, coated with oil or subject to corrosion, need to be sheltered to qualify for the No Exposure Certification.



A closed dumpster and an awning over the loading dock keep significant materials from being exposed to storm water. Note that the dumpster is in good condition and no spills of materials are on the ground.

## How do I obtain an NPDES permit?

If your small business has a regulated SIC code and your facility cannot qualify for no exposure certification, you must apply for NPDES general permit coverage.

To obtain coverage under the NPDES general permit, you will need to submit a one page Industrial Notice of Intent (NOI) form to DSW along with the application fee (\$350 at the time of publication).

You must prepare a SWP3 for your facility before submitting your NOI. The NOI form, instructions for its completion, and the mailing address are available on Ohio EPA's website for the Industrial Storm Water General Permit.

The NPDES general permit must be renewed every five years.

## What is a SWP3?

A SWP3 identifies potential sources of pollution that may affect the quality of storm water discharges at your small business. The plan also describes and ensures the implementation of best management practices (BMP), which reduce the pollutants in your storm water discharges. The four major steps in developing a SWP3 include:

- planning and organization;
- source assessment;
- BMP selection; and
- SWP3 implementation evaluation.

### **\*\* IMPORTANT \*\***

BMPs make good sense for small businesses whether or not you are required to obtain an NPDES permit. Do your part - help protect human health and the environment by initiating BMPs at your business.

## Step 1: Planning and organization requirements

Take the following steps to initiate the development of your SWP3.

- Form a pollution prevention team that will develop, implement, maintain and revise your SWP3 when necessary.
- Review any existing environmental management plans that your business may have and determine which, if any, sections of these plans can be used to develop your SWP3.

## Step 2: Source assessment requirements

To identify potential sources of pollutants to your storm water discharges, you must:

- Create a map of your facility to locate pollution sources, such as waste or raw material storage areas, and determine storm water management opportunities.
- Conduct an inventory of the types of materials that are handled, stored or processed at your facility.

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This facility is collecting and storing waste fluids under cover and with containment to avoid exposing pollutants to storm water.



Storm-resistant shelters are one way to store materials outside.



Dispose of unused equipment rather than stockpiling on-site.

- Provide a list of toxic hazardous material spills and leaks that have occurred at your facility in the past three years.
- Evaluate existing storm water sampling data.
- Summarize the findings of your assessment to help determine opportunities to address sources of storm water pollution.

### Step 3: Best management practices

Proper BMPs must be selected to address sources of storm water pollution. An SWP3 typically includes the following BMPs:

- good housekeeping;
- preventative maintenance;
- visual inspections; and
- spill prevention and spill response.

Examples of each of these BMPs follow. For more information on BMPs, contact DSW at (614) 644-2001.

#### What are good housekeeping practices?

Good housekeeping involves maintaining a clean, orderly work area.

Examples of good housekeeping practices include:

- Improve operation and maintenance of facility machinery and processes to prevent leaks and spills.
- Implement careful material storage practices.
- Maintain an up-to-date material inventory.
- Schedule routine cleanup operations.



This bin of scrap metal is an example of waste materials exposed to storm water.



The above-ground storage tank is not considered exposed as long as the drain valve on the dike remains shut. However, any discharge of storm water that collects in the dike would require an NPDES permit.

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## What are preventative maintenance practices?

Preventative maintenance practices include, but are not limited to:

- Inspections and maintenance of storm water management devices such as retention basins and oil- water separators.
- Routine inspections of facility operations to detect faulty equipment before fluid leaks occur.
- Regular checks of equipment such as tanks, containers, and drums for signs of deterioration.

## What are visual inspection practices?

Visual inspection practices should include:

- Designate trained plant personnel to regularly inspect your facility's equipment and areas, track inspection results, make necessary changes and maintain records of all inspections.
- Ensure that inspection records include dates when inspections were performed, who conducted the inspections, the areas inspected, problems found and corrective actions taken.

## What are spill prevention and response practices?

Examples of spill prevention and response practices include:

- Identify areas where significant materials could enter your storm water discharge systems.
- Ensure that employees are aware of emergency response procedures, including material handling and storage.
- Ensure that appropriate spill cleanup equipment is accessible.

## **Step 4: SWP3 implementation and evaluation requirements**

- To implement your SWP3 and keep it up-to-date, you must:
- Implement the selected storm water BMPs.
- Train employees to understand goals of SWP3 and BMPs.
- Conduct quarterly facility inspections.
- Revise your SWP3 based on major changes in design, construction, operation or maintenance at your facility.
- Maintain records of spills, leaks, inspections and maintenance activities.

### **\*\* IMPORTANT \*\***

Significant materials can include:

- fuels, solvents, coolants, lubricants and cleaners;
- metallic materials;
- raw, intermediate and final products;
- machining fluids;
- wastes and scrap materials;
- dust or residuals;
- processing or production operations;
- hazardous substances; and
- chemicals.

## **Do I have any reporting requirements?**

You must conduct an annual comprehensive site inspection and document your findings in an **annual report**. The Reporting Form must be completed and maintained on-site with your SWP3. In addition, facilities having certain SIC codes are required to collect storm water samples, have them analyzed at a laboratory and submit the data to Ohio EPA. The industrial storm water general permit identifies whether your industry is required to collect, analyze and submit sample data to Ohio EPA.

## **What about construction sites?**

If your small business plans to expand its operations or build a new facility, a separate NPDES storm water discharge permit is required for construction activities that disturb more than one acre of land. You can learn more about the storm water permitting requirements for construction sites on Ohio EPA's **Storm Water Program website** or call (614) 644-2001.

## **Where can I go for help?**

For more information visit Ohio EPA's **Storm Water Program website** or call (614) 644-2001. Ohio EPA's district offices have storm water specialists that can be a great help in answering your questions and evaluating your storm water BMPs. See Ohio EPA's **website for a district office map** and a list of **storm water program contacts**.