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Stormwater Phase II Final Rule

Public Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure

This fact sheet profiles the Public Education and Outreach minimum control measure, one of six measures an operator of a Phase II-regulated small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) is required to include in its stormwater management program to meet the conditions of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit. This fact sheet outlines the Phase II Final Rule requirements and offers some general guidance on how to satisfy them. It is important to keep in mind that the regulated small MS4 operator has a great deal of flexibility in choosing exactly how to satisfy the minimum control measure requirements.

Why Is Public Education and Outreach Necessary?

An informed and knowledgeable community is crucial to the success of a stormwater management program since it helps to ensure the following:

- ***Greater support*** for the program as the public gains a greater understanding of the reasons why it is necessary and important. Public support is particularly beneficial when operators of small MS4s attempt to institute new funding initiatives for the program or seek volunteers to help implement the program; and

- ***Greater compliance*** with the program as the public becomes aware of the personal responsibilities expected of them and others in the community, including the individual actions they can take to protect or improve the quality of area waters.

What Is Required?

To satisfy this minimum control measure, the operator of a regulated small MS4 needs to:

- ❑ Implement a public education program to distribute educational materials to the community, or conduct equivalent outreach activities about the impacts of stormwater discharges on local waterbodies and the steps that can be taken to reduce stormwater pollution; and

- ❑ Determine the appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for this minimum control measure. Some program implementation approaches, BMPs (i.e., the program actions/activities), and measurable goals are suggested below.

What Are Some Guidelines for Developing and Implementing This Measure?

Three main action areas are important for successful implementation of a public education and outreach program:

❶ *Forming Partnerships*

Operators of regulated small MS4s are encouraged to utilize partnerships with other governmental entities to fulfill this minimum control measure's requirements. It is generally more cost-effective to use an existing program, or to develop a new regional or state-wide education program, than to have numerous operators developing their own local programs. Operators also are encouraged to seek assistance from non-governmental organizations (e.g., environmental, civic, and industrial organizations), since many already have educational materials and perform outreach activities.

❷ *Using Educational Materials and Strategies*

Operators of regulated small MS4s may use stormwater educational information provided by their State, Tribe, EPA Region, or environmental, public interest, or trade organizations instead of developing their own materials. Operators should strive to make their materials and activities relevant to local situations and issues, and incorporate a variety of strategies to ensure maximum coverage. Some examples include:

- ***Brochures or fact sheets*** for general public and specific audiences;
- ***Recreational guides*** to educate groups such as golfers, hikers, paddlers, climbers, fishermen, and campers;
- ***Alternative information sources,*** such as web sites, bumper stickers, refrigerator magnets, posters for bus and subway stops, and restaurant placemats;
- ***A library of educational materials*** for community and school groups;
- ***Volunteer citizen educators*** to staff a ***public education task force;***
- ***Event participation*** with educational displays at home shows and community festivals;
- ***Educational programs*** for school-age children;
- ***Storm drain stenciling*** of storm drains with messages such as "Do Not Dump - Drains Directly to Lake;"
- ***Stormwater hotlines*** for information and for citizen reporting of polluters;
- ***Economic incentives*** to citizens and businesses (e.g., rebates to homeowners purchasing mulching lawnmowers or biodegradable lawn products);and
- ***Tributary signage*** to increase public awareness of local water resources.

❸ *Reaching Diverse Audiences*

The public education program should use a mix of appropriate local strategies to address the viewpoints and concerns of a variety of audiences and communities, including minority and disadvantaged communities, as well as children. Printing posters and brochures in more than one language or posting large warning signs (e.g., cautioning against fishing or swimming) near storm sewer outfalls are methods that can be used to reach audiences less likely to read standard materials. Directing materials or outreach programs toward specific groups of commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to have significant stormwater impacts is also recommended. For example, information could be provided to restaurants on the effects of grease clogging storm drains and to auto garages on the effects of dumping used oil into storm drains.

What Are Appropriate Measurable Goals?

Measurable goals, which are required for each minimum control measure, are intended to gauge permit compliance and program effectiveness. The measurable goals, as well as the BMPs, should reflect the needs and characteristics of the operator and the area served by its small MS4. Furthermore, they should be chosen using an integrated approach that fully addresses the requirements and intent of the minimum control measure. Finally, they should allow the MS4 to make improvements to its program over each 5-year permit term by providing data on program successes and shortfalls.

EPA has developed a Measurable Goals Guidance for Phase II MS4s that is designed to help program managers comply with the requirement to develop measurable goals. The guidance presents an approach for MS4 operators to develop measurable goals as part of their stormwater management plan. For example, an MS4 could develop a stormwater public education campaign for radio and television. The goal of the campaign might be to increase the number of dog owners who pick up after their pets. To measure the program's progress towards this goal, the program manager might perform a stormwater public awareness survey at the beginning, during, and at the end of the permit term to gauge any change is pet owner behavior over time. As another example, an MS4 might want to encourage "do-it-yourselfers" to recycle used motor oil by establishing and advertising a municipal drop-off center. The MS4 could measure progress toward this goal by tracking the amount of motor oil collected and correlating those data to the timing of public service announcements and other advertisements to see if their message is being received.

For Additional Information

Contacts

- U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management
  http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater
  Phone: 202-564-9545

- Your NPDES Permitting Authority. Most States and Territories are authorized to administer the NPDES Program, except the following, for which EPA is the permitting authority:

Alaska	Guam
District of Columbia	Johnston Atoll
Idaho	Midway and Wake Islands
Massachusetts	Northern Mariana Islands
New Hampshire	Puerto Rico
New Mexico	Trust Territories
American Samoa	

- A list of names and telephone numbers for each EPA Region and State is located at http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater (click on "Contacts").

Reference Documents

- EPA's Stormwater Web Site
  http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater
  - Stormwater Phase II Final Rule Fact Sheet Series
  - Stormwater Phase II Final Rule (64 *FR* 68722)
  - National Menu of Best Management Practices for Stormwater Phase II
  - Measurable Goals Guidance for Phase II Small MS4s
  - Stormwater Case Studies
  - Stormwater Month Materials
  - And many others
- Getting In Step
  http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/outreach/documents/getnstep.pdf