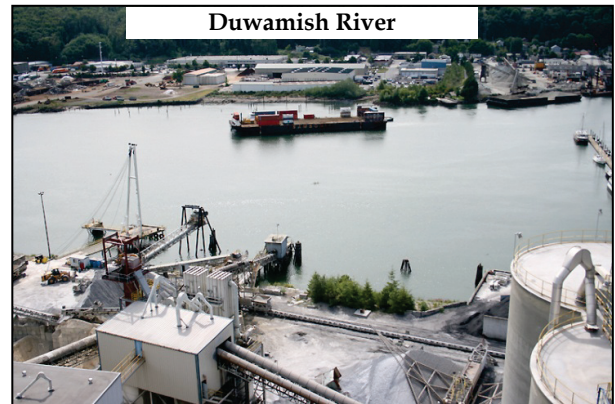


Ecology Issues New Industrial Stormwater General Permit

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a draft Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISWGP) in June 2009. Ecology sought public comments on the draft permit June 3, 2009, through July 15, 2009. Ecology received approximately 800 comments from more than 100 stakeholders, including trade associations, businesses, state and local governments, ports, and environmental groups. Ecology made several changes and issued the final Industrial Stormwater General Permit on October 21, 2009.



The Final Industrial Stormwater General Permit becomes effective on January 1, 2010.

Ecology made several changes to the permit, including format improvements that should make it easier for industrial facilities to understand and comply with the permit. These and other changes to the permit help us better protect Washington's waters – now and into the future.

What is the Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISWGP)?

The ISWGP implements state and federal regulations that require industrial facilities to control stormwater using Best Management Practices to prevent water pollution. The statewide permit currently covers more than 1,200 facilities that discharge stormwater associated with industrial activity into surface waters and storm drains. Ecology receives more than 100 new ISWGP permit applications a year.

Why does the Industrial Stormwater Permit matter?

Polluted stormwater is the state's largest source of urban water pollution. Uncontrolled industrial stormwater runoff sends oil, grease, silt, and toxic substances into our waterways. Even small concentrations of polluted runoff are bad for fish and other aquatic life.

Copper and zinc, which are commonly found in industrial runoff, are harmful to salmon and other aquatic life, even at relatively low concentrations.

Humans are also exposed to the pollution when swimming or eating contaminated fish and shellfish. The Industrial Stormwater General Permit is one of the state's key tools to protect water quality in Puget Sound and in Washington's lakes, streams, and rivers. Washington's waters are ours to protect. This permit helps us all to do this better.

What is different between the old and the new permit?

Ecology wrote this new permit using plain language. We used an outline format that requires less time and effort to find specific requirements. We used simpler wording to make it easier for facility managers to understand the requirements. Ecology made several other important changes to the permit. The new permit:

- Allows businesses the time and flexibility to make incremental progress toward reducing stormwater pollution, while staying in compliance with the permit and Clean Water Act.
- Requires all permittees to implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and make incremental revisions (additional Best Management Practices or BMPs) if monitoring results are above benchmarks¹.
- Sets new reduced benchmarks for metals such as zinc and copper.
- Requires all permittees to measure copper levels in their stormwater runoff.
- Allows facilities to suspend stormwater sampling if their runoff meets the benchmark four consecutive quarters.
- Creates numeric effluent limits for dischargers to 303(d)-listed, impaired waterbodies².

This permit better reflects our increased understanding of the harm that can come from uncontrolled stormwater runoff from industrial facilities and our better understanding of how to best control that stormwater. To help industrial facilities meet these new requirements, Ecology plans to continue to provide and enhance technical assistance to industrial permittees.

Controlling the sources of contaminants is an important way to keep Washington's waters clean. Industries do their part by complying with this permit.

Where can I get information that is more specific or a copy of the new Industrial Stormwater General Permit?

Visit the Industrial Stormwater General Permit Webpage at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/industrial/index.html or contact main reception at 360-407-6000, Department of Ecology PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600.

¹ The permit defines a benchmark as an indicator value. Pollutant concentrations below the benchmark are unlikely to cause a water quality violation, and concentration levels that are greater than the benchmark may cause a water quality violation. Monitoring results that do not meet benchmarks do **not** trigger fines or penalties. Instead, they trigger adaptive management practices intended to achieve monitoring results at or below the benchmarks and ultimately reduce the amount of pollution that reaches Washington's lakes, rivers, and streams.

² Category 5 means that the waterbody is Category 5 - Polluted waters that require a TMDL: the traditional list of impaired water bodies traditionally known as the 303(d) list. Placement in this category means that Ecology has data showing that the water quality standards have been violated for one or more pollutants, and there is no TMDL or pollution control plan. TMDLs are required for the water bodies in this category. For more information visit www.ecy.wa.gov/Programs/wq/303d/index.html