

# **Storm Water Permits**

**Who needs them?**

**How to get them?**

**How do I keep the inspectors off my back?**

Since 1992, the U.S. EPA has required states to implement a storm water program to regulate runoff from industrial sources and most construction sites. EPA maintains oversight over the Iowa program and can also directly implement enforcement action on construction sites, industrial sites and cities. The intent of the program is to require proper sediment and erosion controls be implemented to minimize sediment loss and reduce discharge of other pollutants such as concrete washout and fuel from construction sites and to reduce discharge of pollutants from industrial sites including ready mix plants.

Currently, construction sites that disturb one acre or more must have storm water permit coverage prior to starting soil-disturbing activities. Most sites are covered under General Permit no. 2 but a few are under individual permits.

Most industrial facilities are permitted under General Permit no. 1. Because many concrete plants, asphalt plants and rock crushers are mobile, the Department wrote General Permit no. 3 to facilitate relocation of these facilities. Quarries and sand/gravel facilities are also included.

Some of these facilities do not need to obtain storm water permit coverage.

No discharge to a Water of the State = No GP3 needed

If all the water goes into the pit and is never discharged = No GP3 needed

If all the water goes into the pit and is discharged under GP5 for quarry dewatering = No GP3 needed

If the plant is at a quarry that already has GP3 coverage and the SWPPP is modified to include the plant = No GP3 needed

Everyone else = GP3 needed

If the plant doesn't relocate = Easy. Get the permit and comply with the permit.

Portable plants = Less easy. Send relocation notice to DNR along with the proof of public notice for the site if the company has not had a plant at that site before. Ideally prior to use at the site. DNR realizes this cannot always happen so do it ASAP. Then, comply with the permit.

Portable plants at quarries or pits that already have GP3 = Maybe easy. If a portable plant is located at these sites, the plant can be covered under the GP3 coverage of the quarry if SWPPP is modified. Then, comply with the permit.

## Just what is a GP3?

1. General permits contain general provisions.
2. DNR has 3 storm water general permits.
3. As of last Friday, there were 546 authorizations under GP3.
4. A SWPPP is required for each authorization.

## **What's a SWPPP?**

**Detailed requirements are found in General Permit no. 3**

1. Site description including site map
  - a. drainage patterns
  - b. control measures including sediment and erosion control measure if applicable
  - c. surface waters
2. Materials stored or processed onsite
3. Responsible person(s)

## How do I get permit coverage?

1. Publish the public notice in the local newspaper, when needed
  2. Write or modify the SWPPP
  3. Complete the app form and send with proof of public notice and fee
- OR
4. Apply online, upload proof of public notice, pay with CC or e-check
  5. Do not send SWPPP unless requested. We do request some SWPPPs.
  6. When relocating to a new site, send proof of public notice if needed and relocation form – don't forget to modify the SWPPP

## How to be in compliance

1. Read the SWPPP
2. Implement the SWPPP
3. Inspect your facility regularly
4. Minimize the loss of material in runoff water
5. Document inspections and actions taken

## **What happens when the friendly DNR inspector arrives for a visit**

1. Have the SWPPP ready, the inspector will want to see it
2. Outfalls will be observed, samples may be taken
3. Good housekeeping practices will be observed
4. Records will be examined

## Handling of concrete washout

Washout has extremely high concentrations of fine, particulate solids and a high pH. Both of these can quickly destroy aquatic life. The fines can sometimes be seen in streams and as a plume in rivers for miles. Washout can also contaminate groundwater if disposed of on the ground or in unlined pits in soils with a low clay content. It can also plug storm sewers and if it sets up hard, be far more difficult to remove than sediment.

1. Must not reach a Water of the State
2. Check with local authority
3. Construction sites should have designated washout areas

## **But I don't need no storm water permit**

Even if no permit is required, if sediment or other particulates reach a waterbody and cause a water quality violation (change in turbidity or other parameters), a violation will have been caused. The Department may then implement enforcement action including requiring a permit and monetary penalty.

If it is possible for sediment or other particulates to reach a waterbody from a site, no matter how small, appropriate controls should be implemented to protect the waterbody and the owner/operator of the site.

For further information, contact the DNR's Storm Water Coordinator at 515-725-8417.

The Storm Water Program webpage:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/NPDES-Storm-Water>

**Questions?**