



The National Park Service EnviroFact Sheet

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Managing Storm Water (G-11)

DRAFT

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Storm Water discharges are generated by runoff from land and impervious areas such as paved streets, parking lots and building rooftops during rain, snow and other precipitation. By running over contaminated surfaces, storm water may become polluted.

EPA tries to control pollution generated from contaminated storm water by requiring a permit for discharges of anything other than pure rainwater. This may mean that discharges from your parking lot, or from a pipe, a ditch, a channel, or a conduit, may require a permit.

Permits are obtained through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit program. The purpose of the permit program is to control the discharge of contaminated storm water into surface water.

Storm water discharges of potential relevance to park operations usually come from "industrial" activities and/or construction activities.

The best method to control storm water discharges is through the use of "best management practices." It may be easier to control activities that are exposed to storm water rather than obtain a permit.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Under the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program established a system of permits for direct discharges of contaminated storm water to surface waters. If any park operations (e.g., maintenance, landscaping, waste collection) are exposed to storm water, some permitting requirements may apply.



Most states have developed their own EPA-approved NPDES programs. Under a state NPDES program, the state will determine if a park's operations require storm water permits. Permitting requirements will differ from state to state. For example, one state may require a permit for marinas, parking lots, or outdoor storage operations, while another state may not. To see if your state has an authorized NPDES permitting program for storm water, see EPA's Office of Wastewater Management website at: http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/statestats.cfm?program_id=12.

ACTIVITIES REQUIRING A PERMIT

Industrial Activities

Most operations at parks occur outdoors and, therefore, can be exposed to storm water. If runoff from these activities could discharge pollutants into nearby storm drains or sewers, water quality could be impacted. For example, if your park has a large parking lot, think of the potential pollutants generated as rainwater washes oily waste from the parking lot into nearby streams.

EPA requires permits for facilities that fall into one of 11 categories of "storm water discharges associated with industrial activity." (NOTE: The phrase "industrial activity" includes a broad group of activities that may not immediately be thought of as "industrial.") Of relevance to NPS facilities are marinas, ferries, hotels and lodgings, campsites and automotive repair shops. After determining if park operations fall into one of the regulated categories, contact your state environmental agency to determine if the park's specific operations require a permit.



Construction Activities

Storm water runoff from construction activities can have a significant impact on water quality, contributing sediment and other pollutants from construction sites. The EPA Storm Water Program requires operators of both large and small construction sites to obtain authorization to discharge storm water under an NPDES construction storm water permit. Permitting requirements depend on the size of the construction site. Again, you must contact your state environmental agency to determine if the park's construction activities will require a permit.

NO EXPOSURE CERTIFICATION

If park operations fall into any of the 11 industrial categories, you may still avoid permitting requirements if you can certify that none of the park's materials or operations are exposed to storm water. You must check with your state environmental agency to determine if their permitting program includes the "no exposure" certification. **NPS facilities are encouraged, as a best management practice, to ensure that all operations that could trigger storm water permitting meet the "no exposure" exclusion requirements, where feasible.**

POLLUTION PREVENTION

The following are best management practices to reduce storm water pollution:

- Use "green" products (e.g., biodegradable antifreeze, phosphorus-free detergents).
- Keep litter, animal wastes, leaves, and debris out of storm drains.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease and antifreeze. Do not hose them into the street where they can eventually reach local streams and lakes.
- Control soil erosion by planting groundcover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas.
- Do not expose pesticides, waste containers, or scrap metals to the elements.

FOR MORE INFO...

EPA Office of Wastewater Management Storm NPDES web page:
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/>

List of 11 categories of "Industrial Activities":
http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/swcats.cfm?program_id=6

STORM WATER COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Checklist Item	Notes
1. Ensure that the proper permitting authority (the state or EPA) has been contacted to determine the applicability of storm water permitting requirements for activities at the park that are exposed to precipitation (e.g., marina operations, vehicle maintenance, equipment storage, or disposal sites).	
2. If the park conducts any of the following operations, ensure that it has confirmed and documented whether a storm water permit is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicle maintenance;• Parking facilities;• Wastewater treatment;• Landfill operation; or• Steam or coal-fired boilers.	
3. If park activities trigger permit requirements, ensure that the park has applied for a permit, maintains a copy of the permit, and has implemented permit conditions.	
4. Wherever feasible, ensure that potential storm water pollutants are stored inside or under a roof so that they do not come in contact with rainwater, either directly or through runoff (run-on or runoff). Potential storm water pollutants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal wastes;• General facility maintenance operations (i.e., painting, paint scraping, auto repair or maintenance);• Pesticides;• Oils and solvents;• Fueling operations;• Salvage materials;• Batteries; and• Dumpsters. <p>If these pollutants cannot be stored under cover, ensure that their outdoor storage does not trigger storm water permitting requirements.</p>	