

Fact Sheet
Water Quality Permits for Construction Related Activities

Water Protection Bureau
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

MPDES Storm Water Permit: Construction related activities that result in greater than one acre of disturbance and may generate storm water runoff from the construction site during the life of the project must obtain authorization prior to initiation of the construction activity. For purposes of this regulation, construction activities include clearing, grading, excavation, and stockpiling or placement of earthen materials. Routine maintenance activities that disturb less than 5 areas and do not change the original configuration of the site are not subject to this regulation. The owner or operator is required to develop a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). These discharges are covered under a general permit (MTR10000). Coverage under the general permit is effective upon receipt of a completed NOI package (application, storm water pollution prevention plan, and fee).

MPDES Construction Dewatering: Non-storm water discharges of sediment laden water from coffer dams, trenches, pipeline construction, excavation pits, borrow areas, well development or other activities that is discharged to state waters, including irrigation canals, drainage ditches and wetlands, are prohibited unless authorized by the Department. Typically, these activities are authorized under the Department's general permit for construction dewatering (MTG070000). Under most conditions the permittee is required to construct and operate some form of treatment to remove turbidity and sediment to meet state water quality standards. The discharge of ground water that contains petroleum contaminants or other wastes must be authorized and comply with the requirements of the Department's petroleum clean up general permit (MTG790000 or MTX30000) prior to discharge to state surface or ground water. These permits are typically issued within 30 days of receipt of a completed application.

Short-term water quality standard for turbidity (318): Montana water quality standards prohibit the increase in sediment or turbidity above specific amounts in state surface waters. A Section 318 authorization provides a short-term turbidity standard for activities that are conducted in state waters and may cause disturbance of the streambed sediments. A 318 authorization is typically processed in 7 to 21 days but may require longer review for complexity or environmentally sensitive areas.

401 Certification: Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act is administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers; these permits are for dredge and fill in waters of the US, including wetlands. Please contact the Corps at (406) 441-1375. The Department provides CWA 401 certification of 404 projects and works directly with the Corps on these issues. A joint application form is used.

General Information

Fees: All of the above permits require the applicant to pay a fee prior to Department review of the application. The fee varies depending on the type of permit and complexity of the project. A fee schedule is available upon request at (406) 444-3080, or on the Departments website at:
www.deq.mt.gov