



Frequently Asked Questions: Regulation of stormwater and wastewater discharges

Q: How are stormwater and wastewater discharges from industrial sand operations regulated?

A. Stormwater and wastewater discharges from industrial sand operations are regulated under the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit program administered and enforced by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) under Wis. Stat. ch. 283. This is the same program that regulates discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants and manufacturing operations.

WDNR uses two types of permits: *individual permits* and *general permits*. *Individual permits* are tailored specifically for a given project. *General permits* (GP) apply to a category of similar activities that meet certain criteria and impose the same requirements on all projects that meet those criteria. General permits are designed to set standardized conditions for uniformity, reduce paperwork, expedite the permit processing and facilitate compliance.

Q. Do the requirements apply to protect both surface water and groundwater?

A. Yes. The requirements apply to protect both surface water and groundwater.

Q. Has WDNR developed a General Permit for nonmetallic mining operations?

A. Yes. WDNR has developed a General Permit to Discharge under the WPDES Permit Program for Nonmetallic Mining Operations – WI-0046515-05 (Nonmetallic Mining GP). It applies to nonmetallic mining operations that use either the dry or wet process. Those processes are described as follows on page 5 of the Nonmetallic Mining GP Fact Sheet:

- Dry Process - No water is used to wash or classify [i.e., separate into different sizes] the sand. Usually sand is extracted from beaches or crushed from sandstone. Following drying and cooling, the sand is classified by screening. For air pollution control, the facility may use dry collectors, such as cyclones and baghouses, or wet scrubbers. Incidental water uses may include noncontact cooling water [i.e., water used for cooling that does not come into contact with the sand] for crusher bearings.
- Wet Process - Water is used to transport, wash and initially screen the sand. The sand is dried, cooled, and screened. Noncontact cooling water may be used for crusher bearings.

Q. What does the Nonmetallic Mining GP cover?

A. The Nonmetallic Mining GP regulates the discharge of both process wastewater and stormwater from these operations to either surface waters (streams, rivers, lakes) or groundwater. It includes requirements for physical controls to limit the quantity of discharges, effluent limitations on the content or quality of mine dewatering wastewater, cooling and noncontact cooling water and other wastewaters, annual inspections, and preparation of and compliance with a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Q. Where can I find more information about the Nonmetallic Mining GP?

A. The Nonmetallic Mining GP expired on March 31, 2014, and is due for reissuance. Until it is reissued, the expired permit remains in effect and facilities are still required to comply with its terms. The Nonmetallic Mining GP Notice of intent form, fact sheet and permit are available at these links:

Notice of Intent

http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/documents/46515_rfc.pdf

Fact Sheet

http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/documents/46515_fs.pdf

Permit:

http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/documents/46515_permit.pdf

WISA Member responsible for periodic review/updating of this FAQ: Rich Budinger

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