

Surviving Inspections

For facilities with a storm water NPDES permit, inspections are no longer a remote possibility but are becoming a regular reality for many permittees. To survive an inspection, you need more than the “*luck-of-the-Irish*”. It takes a consistent and proactive compliance program, thorough documentation, and training of your employees on how to handle an inspection. Here are some tips for surviving your next inspection:



- ♣ Make sure the SWPPP is up to date, the facility map is accurate, the certification statement is signed, and employees know where the SWPPP is located.
- ♣ Keep storm water observation records up to date.
- ♣ Organize the storm water compliance files so that annual reports, past observation data, and analytical data can be easily located.
- ♣ Follow-up on benchmark exceedances and maintain documentation on what you did as a result of any benchmark exceedances.
- ♣ Don't wave any **red flags** for the inspector. For example, keep the garbage bin lids closed; don't leave any open buckets, drip pans, or other pollutant sources out in the open exposed to storm water; cover greasy, oily, or other contaminated equipment with tarps; clean out any debris or pollutants from drain inlets; clean up any used absorbent or oily spots; and keep maintenance activities under cover.
- ♣ Have an active good housekeeping program.
- ♣ Label storm drains to state something like, “[Only Storm Water – Drains to River.](#)”
- ♣ Train employees on where storm water records are maintained; how the SWPPP is organized; how storm water drains from the site; where observations are made and samples are collected; and what to do during an inspection.

If you haven't been inspected yet, your “*luck*” may run out soon. But, following the above-recommendations will place a pot o' gold at the end of the inspection rainbow.



MARCH'S "TO DO LIST":

- March Storm Water Observations (Form 4) at all outfalls.
- Storm Water Sampling – Two for each representative outfall. (Don't forget to sample releases from tank farms and storm water ponds.)
- Last month to do the 3rd Quarter Non-Storm Water Observations (Forms 2 & 3 by March 31)
- Review your analytical results. Submit a letter to the appropriate RWQCB for any benchmark exceedances.



We Have a Winner !!!

Congratulations to **Larry Eshelman**, the winner of the February 2010 storm water contest!

During the required monthly visual inspections of the outfalls, what must you be looking for and record on your visual observation form?

Larry writes:

- During monthly storm visual inspections at the outfalls, you are looking for whether the storm water discharge is clear, cloudy, or discolored; causing staining; containing floating objects or an sheen; has odors, etc. If pollutants are found you note them on form # 4.

Larry will be sent a \$25 gift card to Chili's. So, if you work with Larry, tell him what day you are available for lunch!





WILL I REALLY BE INSPECTED? BY WHO?

The question is not by who, but by whom. Many permittees are surprised to find out there are more than one agency that may inspect their facility. Actually, most facilities have the possibility of being inspected by **three** different agencies. Here is how it works:



Federal Government / United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act and the NPDES program. The USEPA occasionally inspects industrial facilities. However, because the NPDES program was delegated to the various States, most of the time when the USEPA inspects a facility for storm water compliance, it is done in conjunction with the State agency.



The **State of California** issued the Industrial NPDES General Permit through the **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)** and allows the various **Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB)** to enforce the permits. Each RWQCB has a person and/or department who is in charge of the Industrial Storm Water Program. They perform compliance inspections for a variety of reasons and causes, which include a complaint from the general public or another agency, benchmark exceedances, collaboration with a municipality, or a compliance-sweep of a certain geographical area or specific industry.

Although it is certainly possible for the Federal or State agencies to inspect your facility, the most likely agency to come visiting will be the local municipality. This is because municipalities also have a NPDES permit, which is called a **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES Permit**. The MS4 permit, for municipalities serving more than 100,000 persons, requires them to perform inspections at industrial facilities. The frequency of these inspections varies from once-a-year to once-every-five-years and is dependent on the specific MS4 permit language. Because of the limited staff and the large number of permittees, the Federal and State governments have found this to be a much more efficient way to get industrial facilities inspected. Therefore, municipalities are mandated through their permits to inspect industrial facilities and can actually be fined by the State and USEPA if they do not fulfill their permit obligation. Of course, no State or Federal dollars have been passed down with this delegated responsibility; so it is becoming more common for the municipalities to bill the inspected parties for their inspections. Facilities that do not pass the municipal inspections are generally given another opportunity to make corrective action and be re-inspected (and are billed for another inspection). If a facility does not satisfactorily respond to the inspection comments, the municipality will refer the non-compliant facility to the State and USEPA.

- Want to learn more about your local MS4 Program? Check out these websites:
- San Diego: www.sandiego.gov/thinkblue/
 - Orange County: www.ocwatersheds.com/
 - Long Beach: www.ocwatersheds.com/
 - San Bernardino County: www.sbcountystormwater.org/
 - Los Angeles: www.lastormwater.org/
 - San Jose: www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/stormwater/
 - Stockton: www.stocktongov.com/MUD/General/stormwater/stormwater_main.cfm
 - San Joaquin County: www.co.san-joaquin.ca.us/pubworks/STORM%20WATER/StormwaterHomePage.htm
 - Lathrop: www.ci.lathrop.ca.us/storm_drainage/swppp.htm
 - Lodi: www.loidi.gov/stormwater/
 - Sacramento County: www.sactostormwater.org/
 - Modesto: www.ci.modesto.ca.us/pwd/utilities/wastewater/compliance.asp
 - Stanislaus County: www.co.stanislaus.ca.us/publicworks/storm/index.shtm
 - Marin County: www.mcstoppp.org/
 - Redding: www.ci.redding.ca.us/municipalutilities/stormwater.cfm
 - Chico: www.chico.ca.us/building_development_services/sewer/storm_water_management.asp

March Storm Water Contest



By March 31, submit a response for the following:

How long should storm water records including annual reports, observations, analytical results, and maintenance records be retained?

All persons submitting correct answers will be placed in a drawing. The winner will receive a \$25 gift card to **Chili's** (which is also redeemable at Romano's Macaroni Grill, On the Border, and Maggianos). Please submit your entries to jteravskis@wgr-sw.com .

Please contact us if you have any questions ...

Rain Events Newsletter Editor:

John Teravskis jteravskis@wgr-sw.com
 (209) 334-5363 ext. 202

Technical Questions about Storm Water Compliance? Call ...

Aaron Ortiz, aortiz@wgr-sw.com, (209) 810-5151
 John Teravskis, jteravskis@wgr-sw.com , (209) 649-0877
 Bill Senner, bsenner@wgr-sw.com , (310) 629-5260

