



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

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OVERVIEW

Water pollution degrades surface waters making them unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other activities. As authorized by the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches. Individual homes that are connected to a municipal system, use a septic system, or do not have a surface discharge do not need an NPDES permit; however, industrial, municipal, and other facilities must obtain permits if their discharges go directly to surface waters. In most cases, the NPDES permit program is administered by [authorized states](#). Since its introduction in 1972, the NPDES permit program is responsible for significant improvements to our Nation's water quality.



WHAT CAN I FIND ON THIS WEB SITE?

The site contains technical and regulatory information about the NPDES permit program. The NPDES Permits Program consists of a number of programs and initiatives. Links to each of these programs and initiatives are located on the left navigational bar.

- For information on specific facilities with NPDES permits, you can visit [EPA's Envirofacts Warehouse](#). Simple searches can be done by clicking on "Water" and entering your zip code. You can also view a map with NPDES facilities by clicking on "Maps" and choosing "EnviroMapper." Finally, advanced search capabilities can be found under "Queries" and selecting "PCS."
- For information on the compliance and enforcement status of facilities with NPDES permits, you can visit [EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online \(ECHO\)](#).



The documents on this site are best viewed with Acrobat 8.0

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This page was generated on Wednesday, July 11, 2007

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