



FOCUS

Protect the City of Pasco's Wastewater Treatment Plant



Over the past few years, the city of Pasco Wastewater Treatment Plant has experienced problems, which are believed to be caused by unauthorized discharge of an agricultural chemical, pesticide or other trucked product into the sewage collection system. These discharges, which killed the biological growth at the treatment plant interrupted wastewater treatment. This caused the city to violate its wastewater discharge permit limits. As a result, the city was penalized and a meeting was held with vehicle washers, agricultural fertilizer and pesticide chemical suppliers and truckers, warehousing operations, and other entities that are the potential causes of the upsets.

Local, state and federal regulations prohibit the discharge of certain waste materials into the public sewer system.

The Pasco Municipal Code (PMC) 13.52.280 has specific prohibitions of certain waste materials into the public sewer system such as:

- Waste materials with a pH lower than 5.5 (acidic) or higher than 9.0 (caustic)
- Corrosive property capable of causing damage or hazard to structures, equipment or personnel of the sewage works
- Any waters or waste containing a toxic or poisonous substance in sufficient quantity to injure or interfere with any sewage treatment process (by killing or severely reducing the microbiological populations), constitute a hazard to humans or animals, or create any hazard in the receiving waters of the sewage treatment plant

The state of Washington and the Environmental Protection Agency have similar regulations (Washington Administrative Code Chapter 173-216 and Code of Federal Regulations 40 part 403, respectively) which:

- Prohibit the discharge of waste materials into a municipal sewer system which will interfere with the operation of the sewage treatment plant, be incompatible with the plant, or pass through the plant without proper treatment
- Prohibit the introduction of trucked or hauled waste except at discharges points designated by the municipality

The Washington state departments of Agriculture (WSDA) and Ecology have regulations for the proper transporting, handling, storage and disposal of certain agricultural products and wastes such as pesticides (Washington Administrative Code 16-228) and fertilizers (Washington Administrative Code 173-303).

Consequences for Violations

Enforcement actions may be taken by local, state or federal authorities against any person, business or public entity for violation of the respective laws or regulations. Enforcement actions may be in the form of either civil or criminal prosecution. In the case of violation of a state regulation, civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation and/or criminal penalties of \$10,000 and up to one year in jail may be imposed. Penalties may be substantially higher for violating federal regulations.

Contacts for More Information

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