

## Water Treatment Plant General Permit

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has re-issued a new Water Treatment Plant General Permit which will become effective on September 1, 2014, for a 5-year term. Ecology incorporated improvements to the draft permit based on comments provided by the public during a recent 45-day review period.

Approximately 30 public drinking water filtration and treatment plants (WTPs) around Washington State have notified Ecology to date that they wish to be covered under the new permit. Through this permit, Ecology authorizes WTP facilities to discharge treated wastewater to surface water. Consequently, they must follow the requirements of the permit, which include monitoring their discharge. By law, every five years Ecology must review, modify as needed, and reissue the WTP General Permit.

Ecology implements the Water Pollution Control Law of the State of Washington and the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Under these laws, Ecology requires certain large WTP facilities to obtain coverage under the WTP General Permit. The goal of the CWA and the State Water Pollution Control Law is to reduce and eventually eliminate the discharge of pollutants to the surface waters of the State.

### Who is required to obtain permit coverage?

All WTPs that discharge backwash effluent to surface water and that meet all of the conditions in the following list must obtain coverage unless they are excluded as described.

- Produce potable water or “industrial” water (primary treatment/settled water) where the treatment and distribution of water is the primary function of the facility.
- Have an actual production rate equal to or greater than 35,000 gallons per day (gpd) of treated product water (finished water) as determined on an average monthly basis.
- The wastewater discharge is from water treatment filtration processes (filter backwash, sedimentation/presedimentation basin washdown, sedimentation/clarification, or filter-to-waste).
- The water treatment works are not part of a larger, permitted facility, such as a pulp and paper mill.

### MORE INFORMATION

Water treatment plants produce drinking water for public consumption or “industrial water” for manufacturing or other business operations.

Treatment often involves some combination of:

- Filtering out sediment and disease-causing organisms
- Chemical treatment to remove excess minerals and other contaminants
- Further settling or filtration
- Final disinfection and chemical adjustment to reduce scaling or corrosion within the delivery system

To view, download, or access the WTP General Permit, Fact Sheet, or Notice of Intent (application form), or for answers to general questions, please visit:

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wtp/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wtp/index.html).

### Contact information

Jim Maroncelli  
360-407-6588  
[James.Maroncelli@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:James.Maroncelli@ecy.wa.gov)

### Special accommodations

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Water Quality Program at 360-407-6600.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

This WTP General Permit does **not** cover discharges to surface water of wastewaters produced from ion exchange, reverse osmosis, or slow sand filtration water treatment processes. Neither does the permit cover discharges to publicly-owned treatment works or discharges directly to the ground, where no likelihood exists that the discharge could overflow and reach surface waters. In any case, Ecology may require any WTP facility to obtain coverage under this or another permit if Ecology finds a potential threat to water quality.

### **Substantive changes in Permittee responsibilities**

Aside from minor clarification and typographical changes, the following items identify the new or modified permit requirements that may impact permit implementation and compliance.

- Standardize the General Conditions and consequently reorder the Special Conditions.
- Change the threshold for coverage from a maximum production capacity of at least 50,000 gpd to an actual production rate of at least 35,000 gpd on an average monthly basis.
- Require permit applications electronically via the Secure Access Washington portal at <https://secureaccess.wa.gov/ecy/wqwebportal/>.
- Require submissions of documents and monitoring data electronically.
- Correct the minimum records retention time for monitoring information to 5 years.
- Require monthly reporting of the total daily volume of discharge and the total number of discharge events that occurred each day.
- Decrease the maximum daily discharge limit for total residual chlorine beginning in September 2015 (after a 1-year compliance period).
- Require monthly monitoring of the discharge for total and dissolved arsenic during the third year of the 5-year permit term (September 2016 through August 2017).

### **For more information**

To view, download, or access the new WTP General Permit, updated Fact Sheet, this Focus Sheet, or the Notice of Intent (application form), or for answers to general questions, please visit [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wtp/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wtp/index.html).