



## Focus on: 2025 Industrial Stormwater General Permit

The Industrial Stormwater General Permit applies to nearly 1,200 facilities across Washington. Permitted industries include log yards, tank farms, rail yards, trucking facilities, auto recyclers, marine cargo handling facilities, and manufacturing facilities. Ecology uses the federal Clean Water Act and state law to regulate stormwater at industrial facilities.

### 2025 permit reissuance

We update general permits every five years. This focus sheet covers highlights of the updated permit, effective Jan. 1, 2025. The final permit materials, which includes the fact sheet that describes changes, are available online. During reissuance, we held a comment period from May 15 – June 28, 2024 with two virtual workshops and hearings where people could provide verbal testimony. You can view the feedback we received and the Response to Comments located at [ecology.wa.gov/IndustrialStormwaterPermit](https://ecology.wa.gov/IndustrialStormwaterPermit)

### Clarify protections at transportation facilities

Nearly 300 transportation facilities are covered under the Industrial Stormwater General Permit. This includes ports, railroads, bus barns, trucking facilities, airports, and bulk petroleum facilities.

Since 2010, the permit has required transportation facilities to manage and monitor stormwater in all areas of their industrial operations. However, not all facilities have applied the permit facility-wide. A 2024 ruling by the Washington State Court of Appeals supported Ecology's interpretation. So, we have made changes to make it clear that the **permit applies facility wide**, not just areas where vehicle maintenance, equipment cleaning, and airport deicing occur (which comes from a federal definition from the 1990's).

Also, we have updated the definition of "Industrial Activity" to provide further clarity that it includes material handling activities at intermodal facilities, or facilities where cargo and materials are moved between ships, trains, and trucks. Existing permitted facilities

that were not applying the permit facility-wide have a 6-month compliance schedule to update their stormwater plans and begin sampling their material handling areas.

### Pollution from Material Handling

Stormwater pollution in these Material Handling Areas can come from a few sources. Cargo generally falls into three categories: shipping containers, bulk materials (like paper pulp, grain, metal ore, etc), and break-bulk cargo (such as automobiles or other large machinery). If rain falls on these materials it can pick up dirt, chemicals, and other pollutants, and flow into waterways.

Stormwater monitoring data collected over the last decade confirms that these areas generate pollution. The handling of cargo often involves heavy duty equipment such as reach stackers repeatedly managing the containers and materials in tight turns. As with cars and trucks, material handling equipment may release pollutants to stormwater such as copper from brake pads, and zinc and 6PPD-quinone (6PPDQ) from tire wear. This equipment and activity can also generate additional pollutants from dust, spilled materials, degraded pavement, potholes, and hydraulic fluid.



*These reach stackers do the hard work of moving and stacking heavy cargo containers, so their tires have more zinc to prevent wear and ensure safety.*

## Sampling for PFAS and 6PPD-quinone chemicals

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS) are a large group of chemicals. They are often called “forever chemicals” because they never disappear from the environment. We added PFAS sampling requirements for all facilities in the waste management sector and airports that use, store, or have spills of Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), which contains PFAS. Learn more about PFAS at [ecology.wa.gov/PFAS](https://ecology.wa.gov/PFAS)

6PPD-quinone (6PPDQ) from tire wear particles is lethal to coho salmon and causes water pollution. We know from our initial research that many of the best management practices required in the permit, such as sweeping, catch basin protection, and engineered systems, provide some removal of 6PPDQ. Starting in year 3 of the permit, large transportation facilities will do quarterly sampling for 6PPDQ and small businesses will need to sample once per year. Learn more at [ecology.wa.gov/6PPD](https://ecology.wa.gov/6PPD)

## Adding flexibility on where sampling can occur at wharves and piers

There is a new sampling point waiver process starting in 2025 to allow facilities to adjust where they sample their stormwater discharge.

This is intended to help with safety and logistical issues of sampling wharves and piers at marine cargo handling facilities. We will process these waivers through the permit coverage modification process which goes through the public notice process and requires Ecology review and approval. Waiver approvals will be documented with an administrative order and are subject to appeal.

## Increased oversight by removing the automatic approval for “No Exposure” exemptions

Facilities will remain eligible for an exemption from the permit, if they prevent industrial activity and materials from exposure to rain. We updated the permit to replace the automatic approval with a requirement for Ecology’s review to confirm that there is no exposure to pollutants before approval.

### Contact information

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More information is on our webpage:

<https://ecology.wa.gov/IndustrialStormwaterPermit>

### ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-669-1891 or email at [Jessica.Shook@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Jessica.Shook@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility> TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341

## Example of permit coverage areas

