



Permit Coverage for Biosolids Lagoon Dredging

Program Name: Solid Waste Management **Date Issued:** September 4, 2025

Date(s) of Substantive Updates: Not applicable at this time

References:

[Chapter 173-308 WAC: Biosolids Management](#)

[Statewide General Permit for Biosolids Management](#)

Purpose:

To ensure consistency in decision making and reduce unnecessary administrative burden for Ecology and permittees, we are clarifying language in the Statewide General Permit for Biosolids Management (General Permit).

Facilities subject ONLY to the Baseline section of the General Permit that operate lagoons and send their material for further treatment may request to maintain their Baseline (only) coverage, instead of applying for additional coverage under the Active Biosolids Management section as the permit currently requires.

Application:

This interpretive statement applies to facilities subject to only the Baseline section of the General Permit that operate lagoons and only send their materials for further treatment. The General Permit indicates in section 1.2.1 that for Baseline facilities, the need to clean out their lagoon is the threshold to apply for additional coverage under the Active Biosolids Management section of the General Permit (section 4). However, in practice Ecology has noticed that most lagoons cleaning out and sending for further treatment do not require additional oversight and having them apply for additional coverage takes up precious resources.

According to section 4 of the General Permit, facilities sending for further treatment do not have additional requirements and aren't required to inform Ecology when they send

materials to another permitted facility. Ecology still has oversight of the Baseline facility's lagoon cleanout process and can provide support or observe if necessary. However, some lagoon cleanouts are more complex than others and may require additional oversight from Ecology even when sending materials for further treatment. Some examples include:

- Facilities that are conducting a lagoon cleanout for the first time, or for the first time in years.
- Facilities that are conducting a cleanout prior to decommissioning and closing a lagoon permanently.

Applying for coverage under the Active Biosolids Management section of the General Permit generates a significant amount of administrative work for Ecology and the facility. Facilities that send their materials for further treatment can request to maintain their Baseline (only) coverage. Ecology will decide on a case-by-case basis whether these facilities can maintain Baseline (only) coverage, or if they must apply for additional coverage under the Active Biosolids Management section. The list below includes some of the parameters Ecology will consider when making this decision:

- Whether the facility needs to clean out the lagoon within the current 5-year permit cycle
- Whether the facility will need contracted or mobile dewatering of materials onsite
- The date of the last lagoon cleanout

Requests must be made via email to the appropriate region biosolids coordinator to be considered.

ADA Accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6000 or email at SWMPublications@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>.

For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.