



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

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## **FACT SHEET**

### **APPLICATION FOR GENERAL NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM PERMITS NO. GAR100001, NO. GAR100002, AND NO. GAR100003 FOR STORM WATER DISCHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY**

**May 4, 2018**

#### **Regulatory Background**

The 1972 amendments to the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), also referred to as the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA), prohibit the discharge of any pollutant to the waters of the United States from a point source unless the discharge is authorized by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Initial efforts to improve water quality under the NPDES program focused on reducing pollutants in discharges of industrial process wastewater and from municipal sewage treatment plants.

In response to the need for comprehensive NPDES requirements for discharges of stormwater, Congress amended the CWA in 1987 to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish phased NPDES requirements for stormwater discharges. EPA published an initial permit application and other requirements for certain categories of stormwater discharges associated with industrial activity, including construction activities, on November 16, 1990 (50 FR 47990) and on April 2, 1992 (57 FR 11394).

The CWA provisions are reflected in O.C.G.A. § 12-5-29 and O.C.G.A. § 12-5-30 and also in the Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control (Rules) Chapter 391-3-6-.16 which specifies requirements for stormwater permits. In addition, the Rules Chapter 391-3-6-.03 defines waters of the state.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) amended the Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control (Rules) in April 1990 to allow the issuance of general permits. EPD was granted the authority to issue NPDES general permits by EPA in January 1991. Georgia is a fully authorized State and administers its own NPDES program.

#### **NPDES Permits**

A NPDES permit authorizes the discharge of a pollutant or pollutants into a receiving water under certain conditions. The NPDES program relies on two types of permits: individual permits and general permits. An individual permit is a permit specifically tailored for an individual

discharger for a specific time period (not to exceed five (5) years). A general permit covers multiple facilities, sites, and activities within a specific category for a specific time period (not to exceed five (5) years). Both types of permits are subject to public comment prior to permit issuance. The Federal Regulations, 40 CFR Part 122.26, specify who must apply for NPDES coverage and the requirements that must be included in a NPDES permit.

### **General NPDES Permits No. GAR100001, No. GAR100002 and GAR100003**

NPDES General Permit No. GAR100000 (permit) for stormwater discharges associated with construction activity was issued in 2000 and regulated construction activities that disturbed five (5) or more acres. In 2003, in response to the December 1999 Phase II final rule, the permit was reissued as three general permits that regulate construction activities that disturb one (1) or more acres. NPDES Permit No. GAR100001 regulates stand-alone construction sites, NPDES Permit No. GAR100002 regulates infrastructure construction sites, and NPDES Permit No. GAR100003 regulates common development construction sites. These permits were reissued in 2008 and 2013. The current permits are scheduled to expire July 31, 2018.

### **Regulated Construction Activities**

NPDES General Permits No. GAR100001, No. GAR100002 and No. GAR100003 will authorize the discharge of stormwater from sites where construction activities will result in contiguous land disturbances equal to or greater than one (1) acre or tracts of less than one (1) acre that are part of a larger common plan of development with a combined disturbance one (1) acre or greater. EPD can require an applicant to submit a NPDES permit application for an individual NPDES permit upon written notification to the applicant. In addition to stormwater discharges, the proposed general NPDES permits authorize certain non-stormwater discharges such as fire fighting water and uncontaminated groundwater.

The proposed permit complies with the anti-degradation requirements in the EPD Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control, subparagraph 391-3-6-.03. Existing water quality will not be degraded by the issuance of this permit. The issuance of this permit will protect and improve existing water quality and is consistent with EPD's antidegradation policy. The proposed permits are being issued pursuant to the authority contained in O.C.G.A. §§ 12-5-27 and 12-5-30.

### **Permit Coverage**

Permit coverage must be obtained by submitting a fully completed Notice of Intent (NOI). The NOI will include basic information about the construction site and the receiving waters where the discharges occur.

Upon issuance of the permit, all NOIs for coverage under the General Construction Permits must be submitted through EPD's electronic submittal portal as required by EPA's Electronic Reporting Rule. Existing construction sites must submit a new NOI within ninety (90) days after the effective date of the permits in order to obtain coverage. New sites that begin construction

activities after the effective date of the permits must submit the NOI form at least fourteen (14) days prior to beginning construction activities.

The permittee must specify on the NOI whether or not the facility discharges stormwater associated with construction activity into an Impaired Stream Segment, or within one (1) linear mile upstream of and within the same watershed as, any portion of an Impaired Stream Segment identified as “not supporting” its designated use(s) as shown on Georgia’s most current “305(b)/303(d) List Documents (Approved).” Georgia’s 305(b)/303(d) List Documents may be reviewed on EPD’s website. All permittees are responsible for reviewing each new version of the 305(b)/303(d) List Documents during the term of the permits to check for new stream segment listings.

### Term of the Permit

The proposed permit will be valid for a term of five (5) years in accordance with Federal regulations, which limit NPDES permits to a maximum term of five (5) years. The EPD can require an applicant to submit an application for an individual NPDES permit or an alternative general NPDES permit upon written notification to the applicant

### Permit Changes

#### Summary of General Permit Changes throughout Permits No. GAR100001, No. GAR100002, and No. GAR100003

The General Construction Permits contain the following revisions throughout multiple parts of the permits:

- To improve accuracy and reduce the need for minor permit revisions, hyperlinks have been removed from the permits and can now be found on EPD’s website in the document titled “NPDES General Construction Permit References”.
- Miscellaneous redundant language has been removed from the permits.
- The term “projects” has been changed to “sites” for consistency with the permit definitions.
- The permits contain changes as a result of EPD’s implementation of the NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule. Specific changes are listed below:
  - Beginning on the effective date of the permit, All Notices of Intent (NOIs), Modification NOIs and Notices of Termination (NOTs) must be submitted through EPD’s electronic submittal portal.
  - The term “change of information” has been replaced by “modification”.

- The permittee will be required to submit sampling reports electronically.
- ES&PC Plans required to be submitted to the EPD District Offices must now be submitted electronically through EPD’s electronic submittal portal or as a PDF on CD-ROM or other storage device.

#### Summary of Changes to Part I. Coverage Under This Permit

- In Part I.B., the following definitions have been revised for clarity and/or consistency with established Regulations: “Permittee”, “Phase or Phased”, and “Primary Permittee”.
- In Part I.B., the definition of “Infeasible” was added as follows: “Infeasible” means not technologically possible, or not economically practicable and achievable in light of best industry practices. The definition was taken directly from EPA’s May 2014 Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Construction and Development Point Source Category final rule.
- In Part I.E., the continuing obligations of permittees has been revised for clarification.

#### Summary of Changes to Part II. Notice of Intent Requirements

- Part II.B.1.e. (as well as Part II.B.2.g. & Part II.B.3.f. in GAR100003) has been revised to better align with the language in the 305(b)/303(d) List Documents.

#### Summary of Changes to Part III. Special Conditions, Management Practices, Permit Violations and Other Limitations

- Part III.C. has been revised to better align with the language in the 305(b)/303(d) List Documents.
- In Part III.C.2., all references to anionic polyacrylamide (PAM) have been replaced by “floculants or coagulants” and “matting or blankets” has been replaced with “slope stabilization” to be consistent with the most recent Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control.
- In Part III.C.2., BMP options which were no longer “over and beyond” have been removed from the options to address impaired waters.
- Part III.C.2.d. has been revised to require the permittee to host a website where the ES&PC Plan can be viewed in addition to posting a sign. The sign must remain on site and the ES&PC Plan must be available on the provided website until a NOT has been submitted.
- Part III.C.2.u., EPD added the following BMP option to address impaired waters: *“Conduct inspections during the intermediate grading and drainage BMP phase and*

*during the final BMP phase of the project by the design professional who prepared the Plan in accordance with Part IV.A.5. of the permit.”*

- In Part III.C.2.v., EPD added the following BMP option to address impaired waters: *“Install Post Construction BMPs (e.g., runoff reduction BMPs) which remove 80% TSS as outlined in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual known as the Blue Book or an equivalent or more stringent design manual.”*
- Part III.D.1. has been revised to include correct references to the Permit.
- Part III.D.3. has been revised for clarity and the following language has been added:

*“6. Whenever a permittee finds that a BMP has failed or is deficient (beyond routine maintenance) and has resulted in sediment deposition into waters of the State, the permittee shall immediately take all reasonable steps to address the condition, including cleaning up any contaminated surfaces so the material will not discharge in subsequent storm events. The permittee shall submit a summary of the violations to EPD in accordance with Part V.A.2. of this permit and shall correct such BMP as follows:*

- a. When the repair does not require a new or replacement BMP or significant repair, the BMP failure or deficiency must be repaired within two (2) business days from the time of discovery;*
- b. When the repair requires a new or replacement BMP or significant repair, the installation of the new or modified BMP must be completed and the BMP must be operational by no later than seven (7) days from the time of discovery. If it is infeasible to complete the installation or repair within seven (7) days, the permittee must document why it is infeasible to complete the installation or repair within the seven (7) day timeframe and document the schedule for installing or repairing the BMPs and making the BMPs operational as soon as feasible after the seven (7) day timeframe.”*

#### Summary of Changes to Part IV. Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Plan

- Part IV.D.3.a.(1).(b). has been removed from the permits to be consistent with the minimum Federal requirements for stabilization as outlined in EPA’s May 2014 Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Construction and Development Point Source Category final rule.
- In accordance with 40 CFR Section 450.21(d)(2), Part IV.D.3.c.(2). of the permits has been revised to require permittees to provide cover for on-site construction wastes and building materials such that exposure to precipitation and stormwater is minimized.

- For clarification, Part IV.D.4.a.(2) has been revised as follows: *“Measure and record rainfall within disturbed areas of the site that have not met final stabilization once every 24 hours except any non-working Saturday, non-working Sunday and non-working Federal holiday. The data collected for the purpose of compliance with this permit shall be representative of the monitored activity.”*

Appendix A has been updated to reflect current addresses.

#### Summary of Permit Changes Specific to Permit No. GAR100002

- In Part I.C., coverage under the permit for infrastructure construction projects is not required for discharges of stormwater associated with infrastructure construction projects that consist solely of the installation of cable barriers and guardrail within existing rights-of-way, and for the installation of buried utility lines via vibratory plow. To be eligible for the exemption, projects must avoid mass grading, provide temporary or permanent stabilization at the end of each day and achieve final stabilization at the end of the project.
- Part II.B.1.k. has been revised for clarity.

#### Summary of Permit Changes Specific to Permit No. GAR100003

- In Part II.B.2.l., EPD corrected the language regarding the requirement for a secondary permittee to submit a blanket NOI to the primary permittee no less than seven (7) days prior to the commencement of construction activities.

### **Procedures for the Formulation of Final Determination**

#### Comment Period

The draft permits and supporting documents were available for review at the EPD office located at 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Atlanta, Georgia, 30334, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except official State holidays). The draft permits and public notice were also posted on EPD’s website on December 15, 2017.

#### Public Hearing

A public meeting regarding the permits was held on January 31, 2018 at 9:00 a.m., followed by a public hearing at 10:00 a.m., in EPD’s Training Room located at 4244 International Parkway, Suite 114, Atlanta, Georgia, 30354. Both oral and written comments were accepted at the public hearing; however, for the accuracy of the record, written comments were encouraged. No oral statements were made during the public hearing. Several persons, industry trade groups, and environmental groups provided comments on the proposed NPDES permits both in writing and by email to [EPDComments@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:EPDComments@dnr.ga.gov). The public comment period ended on February 1, 2018. Comments were considered in developing the final permits, and a response to each question was provided.

### Contested Hearings

Any person who is aggrieved or adversely affected by the issuance of denial of a permit by the Director of EPD may petition the Director for a hearing if such petition is filed in the office of the Director within thirty (30) days from the date of notice of such permit issuance. Such hearing shall be held in accordance with EPD Rules, Water Quality Control, subparagraph 391-3-6-.01.

Petitions for a contested hearing must include the following:

1. The name and address of the petitioner;
2. The grounds under which the petitioner alleges to be aggrieved or adversely affected by the issuance of a permit;
3. The reason or reasons why petitioner takes issue with the action of the Director;
4. All other matters asserted by petitioner which are relevant to the action in question

### Issuance of the Permit When No Public Hearing is Held

If no public hearing is held, and, after review of the written comments received, the Director determines that a permit should be issued and that his determinations as set forth in the proposed permit are substantially unchanged, the permit will be issued and will become final in the absence of a request for a contested hearing. Notice of issuance or denial will be circulated to those persons who submitted written comments to the Director on the proposed permit within thirty (30) days from the date of the public notice of such proposed permit, and to all persons or groups included on the EPD mailing list.

If no public hearing is held, but the Director determines, after a review of the written comments received, that a permit should be issued but that substantial changes in the proposed permit are warranted, public notice of the revised determinations will be given and written comments accepted in the same manner as the initial notice of application was given and written comments accepted pursuant to EPD Rules, Water Quality Control, subparagraph 391-3-6-.06(7)(b). The Director shall provide an opportunity for public hearing on the revised determinations. Such opportunity for public hearing and the issuance or denial of a permit thereafter shall be in accordance with the procedures set forth above.