

The Ohio Turnpike Stormwater Management Program

In 1972, the Clean Water Act (CWA) was enacted to strengthen the Water Pollution Control Act (WPCA) of 1948. The CWA was designed to prohibit the discharge of any pollutants to waters of the United States from a point source unless the discharge is authorized under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The NPDES program originally had a main focus on discharges from industrial processes and municipal sewage treatment facilities. These discharges were regulated and controlled, however, surveys showed that approximately forty-percent (40%) of the nation's water bodies were still impaired by pollution. Eventually, storm water run-off was identified to be a major cause of water quality impairment along with agriculture and silviculture (forest) practices.

The two major contributing sources of impairments to the nation's bodies of water are urban/suburban storm water run-off and construction site discharges. Consequently, the CWA was amended in 1987 and provided for the implementation of these discharges to be regulated by NPDES permitting.

The Storm Water Phase II program is the next step to be addressed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to preserve and protect the nation's water resources from polluted storm water run-off. The Phase II program regulates additional owner/operators of storm sewer systems in urbanized areas (defined by the year 2000 U.S. Census data) and owner/operators of small construction sites. In an attempt to improve water quality originating from these sources, the owners are required to address storm water run-off through the use of NPDES permits. Transportation agencies, including the Ohio Turnpike Commission (OTC), are regulated under the NPDES Phase II program and are subject to the compliance requirements. The urbanized areas along the Ohio Turnpike are located in Lucas, Wood, Lorain, Cuyahoga, Summit, Portage, Trumbull, and Mahoning counties.

The Phase II rule was finalized in December 1999 with a required submittal date to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) of March 10, 2003. With the adoption of this rule, the OTC was required to develop and submit a Notice of Intent and Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) for coverage under the OEPA's general permit for stormwater. The OTC submitted the Notice of Intent and SWMP on March 6, 2003, and coverage under the OEPA's general permit was approved on March 19, 2003. The six (6) minimum control measures required to be addressed by the permit are Public Education and Outreach, Public Participation and Involvement, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Run-off Controls, Post Construction Run-off Controls, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping. The SWMP outlines the approach to address these six (6) minimum control measures. Factors such as plan feasibility, implementation, operation and maintenance, and costs were all considered in the plan's development.

A stormwater management committee was created and through a series of meetings and discussions between the Commission's maintenance, engineering, safety services, public affairs, and information systems departments, along with assistance from a consultant, the SWMP was finalized. The SWMP addresses the six (6) minimum control measures by utilizing effective and obtainable best management practices (BMPs). The BMPs are a compilation of existing procedures, modifications of existing procedures, and new procedures that will aid in minimizing the introduction of pollutants to the waters of the state. Measuring the effectiveness of the BMPs is accomplished by performing a survey of the procedures and documenting their implementation and usefulness. This information is then assembled into an annual report and submitted to the OEPA.

Additional information on stormwater management can be found at our website, **www.ohioturnpike.org/stormwater.html**. As part of the public education and involvement minimum control measure, future stormwater management articles will be published in the Turnpike Notes newsletter.