



Water Pollution Control Permit Requirements for Car Washes

Water Protection Program fact sheet

10/2012

Businesses that wash automobiles and trucks at a permanent facility and do not have access to a publicly-owned sewage collection system (that is, a sanitary sewer) are required to apply to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for a Missouri State Operating Permit to discharge the wash water. The wash water must be treated with a system that has been approved by the department before release to the environment. Construction permits are required before construction of such treatment systems.

General Permit

A permit containing general provisions has been issued for this industry, but it is the responsibility of the individual owner or operator of a facility covered by this general permit to apply.

The general permit is available for car wash wastewater treatment systems with design flows of 50,000 gallons per day or less, including land application systems. In addition, a small amount of domestic wastewater can be treated in the wastewater treatment system.

However, a separate construction permit is required to construct the treatment system for the vehicle wash wastewater.

Background

Since the 1972 Clean Water Act, discharges of wastewater have been regulated through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES. A permit is required for any discharges of potential pollutants to waters of the state unless there is a specific exemption. Since 1974, Missouri has been delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to issue NPDES permits. The permits issued by the department are state as well as federal operating permits.

General Permit Requirements

The general permit requires that discharge water parameters be tested, of which some have specific numerical effluent limits. The permittee is responsible for this quarterly analysis. Further, any treatment system must be designed to be able to treat waters to or below the effluent limits.

Sludges and sediment must be handled in accordance with solid waste disposal rules. In addition, discharge from permitted facilities cannot violate the general criteria of Missouri's Water Quality standards. Some of these criteria are, but are not limited to, dissolved oxygen levels, toxic substances, color and odor.

The general permit also has requirements for land application of the wastewater, if this is the chosen method of treatment.

Fees and Application Form

To apply under a general permit for the first time, complete application Form E (MO 780-0795) and submit appropriate fees. After the issuance of the general permit, operating fees will be assessed annually. To request a renewal of the general permit, an application form E must be submitted prior to the expiration of the general permit. No fees will be required with the renewal application form if all the operating annual fees are paid up including any late fee penalties. To apply for a site-specific permit, or if you have any questions concerning fees, please contact the water pollution section at your appropriate regional office. A regional office map is available at www.dnr.mo.gov/regions/regions.htm. If applying for a construction permit to build a treatment device, first contact the department's Water Protection Program to determine if anti-degradation review is needed, then complete and submit forms E and C with the appropriate fees.

Applications and fees for stormwater permits should be mailed to the permits unit chief at the address below. Applications are available at www.dnr.mo.gov/forms/index.html.

Important Dates in Your General Permit:

Each general permit will be issued on a five-year cycle and will list three important dates on the first page of the permit.

Issuance Date: This is the start date of the permit cycle.

Effective Date: This is the date when your permit becomes effective.

Expiration Date: This is the end date of the permit cycle.

Termination of Permit

The permit may be terminated when activities covered by the permit have ceased. It must be terminated if a transfer of ownership of the facility and its activities has been made.

If such a termination of the general permit is sought, the permittee should submit Form H, Termination of a General Permit. If termination of a site-specific permit is sought, the permittee should request such by letter.

For More Information

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Water Protection Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
800-361-4827 or 573-751-1300 office
573-526-1146 fax
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/wpp