

5.3.1.2 Effluent Limits/Technology-Based Effluent Limits/Non-Domestic Discharges/ Use of Effluent Limitation Guidelines

Applicability:

Describes EPA's Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELGs) and Standards. These are also known as categorical standards.

Content:

ELGs are technology based effluent limits created by EPA under section 304 (b) of the Clean Water Act. ELGs are also called "categorical limits or standards". EPA has developed daily and monthly limits for certain industries based on the production of the facility, or, more commonly, a simple concentration based limit. Both daily and monthly limits must be included in the permit.

When designing a treatment system, it is recommended that the permittee target the design of its treatment system to meet the long-term average monthly rather than the daily limits. The daily limit is intended to account for variation in effluent concentration above the monthly limit.

It should be noted that ELGs are not always established for every pollutant present in a point source discharge. In many instances, ELGs are established only for those pollutants that are necessary to ensure that industrial facilities comply with the technology-based requirements of the CWA.

Derivation of effluent limits based on ELGs requires that the permit writer have a general understanding of the ELGs for all industrial categories, and detailed knowledge of the ELGs applicable to the permittee.

Once the appropriate ELGs have been identified, application of the limitations is relatively straightforward since it involves the application of a guideline that has already been technically derived.

Prior to the development of ELGs for each industry, EPA created a Development Document that provides an in-depth study of each industry and gives the rationale for the limits that were finally chosen.

Legal References:

Code of Federal Regulations:

[40 CFR 405 through 471](#) Subchapter N - Effluent Guidelines and Standards

Other Links:

[U.S. NPDES Permit Writers' Manual, Chapter 5](#)

Key Words:

Effluent limitation guidelines, ELGs, categorical standards, categorical limits, categorical industries

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