



June 13, 2024

Subject: **Early notification** of wastewater discharge permit for AKG003000

Dear Local and Tribal Government Leaders

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposes to reissue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) general permit AKG003000 for the Hydrostatic & Aquifer Pump Testing.

Background information

This will be the third reissuance of the AKG003000 – Hydrostatic & Aquifer Pump Testing general permit. The permit authorizes and sets conditions on the discharge of pollutants from authorized hydrostatic testing of tanks, pipelines, and similar containers including water line flushing as well as aquifer pump testing discharges in support of mineral mining development and exploration to waters of the United States (U.S.), or to surface waters of the state or land. To ensure protection of water quality and human health, the permit places limits on the types and amounts of pollutants that can be discharged from the authorized hydrostatic and aquifer pump testing and outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) to which they must adhere.

The APDES Program (18 AAC 83) regulates point source discharges to waters of the U.S., whereas discharges to surface water and land are regulated under the authority of 18 AAC 72 – Wastewater Disposal. The Department's statutory authority for issuing permits under 18 AAC 83 and 18 AAC 72 comes from AS 46.03.100. To meet the requirements of 18 AAC 83 to appropriately regulate surface water discharges as well as 18 AAC 72 and to appropriately regulate land discharges, both discharges to waters of the U.S. and land are covered under this general permit.

To ensure protection of water quality and human health, the permit places limits on the types and amounts of pollutants that can be discharged from the authorized excavation dewatering discharges and outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) to which they must adhere.

Description of discharge

Hydrostatic discharges eligible for coverage under this statewide General Permit including flushing will consist of either potable or non-potable water discharges used to pressurize a tank or vessel to conduct leak detection tests. The discharged water will be free of any additives and primary contaminants that would consist of suspended solids, residual chlorine, and petroleum hydrocarbon residue present in used hydrocarbon transport pipes and storage tanks. This permit also authorizes hydrostatic testing where water is placed within a tank or vessel under atmospheric pressure to detect leaks and the flushing of public water supply lines and storage tanks. The flushing of water lines or tanks often occurs following a new installation where the line or tank may be super chlorinated to disinfect prior to use.

Aquifer pump testing discharges covered under this statewide General Permit are for mineral mining and exploration activities only and would consist of groundwater pump tests conducted to determine well yields, recharge rates, and hydrogeological conditions. Aquifer pump testing discharges would contain pumped groundwater from a water well discharged to either the surface or to a water body. The primary pollutants would be suspended solids, dissolved solids, and potentially naturally occurring trace metals.

General Permit additional information

Any operator that meets the eligibility requirements of the general permit will be authorized to discharge after filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) with DEC so long as all conditions of the permit are met. The public has an opportunity to comment and provide information for this general permit; however, public notice will not be issued for individual NOIs submitted by qualified facilities. The general permit will expire five years after the effective date.

Opportunities for tribal and local government participation in this permitting decision

DEC recognizes rural Alaska has unique needs and considerations with regard to wastewater discharges and strives to issue permits that reflect a full understanding of local conditions. This letter is intended as an **early notice** to assist you in determining whether your community may be affected and inform you of the opportunity to provide traditional, cultural, or other local information that DEC should consider as part of this permit reissuance. DEC would like to know how your area and resources may be affected by this permitting action.

Next steps

After the permit is drafted, there will be a **10 day applicant review period** of the preliminary draft permit. Following the applicant review period, there will be a minimum of a **30 day public review and comment period**. I will provide a copy of the public notice for the permit by mail or e-mail at the start of the public comment period. After the public review and comment period, there will be a **5 day applicant review period** of the final draft permit before the permit is issued.

If requested, I can also provide notice of the preliminary draft and proposed final applicant review periods. Due to the short timeframes for those reviews, notices are sent by email or fax. Please provide an email address or fax number if you would like to receive notices for the preliminary draft and proposed final applicant review periods.

If you would like more information or would like to provide DEC with information about this permit, please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-465-5272 or via email: Gina.Shirey@alaska.gov; for technical questions about the permit, you may also directly contact the permit writer, Sam Kito at (907) 907-269-7542 or via email Sam.Kito@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

Gina Shirey FOR
Gina Shirey

Local and Tribal Government Coordinator

Enclosure: Tribal Involvement in the Permitting Process postcard

cc: Potentially Affected Local Governments
Potentially Affected Federally - recognized Indian Tribes

Tribal Involvement in the Permitting Process postcard

