Appendix C - Small Construction Waivers and Instructions

These waivers are only available to stormwater discharges associated with small construction activities (i.e., 1-5 acres). As the operator of a small construction activity, you may be able to qualify for a waiver in lieu of needing to obtain coverage under this general permit based on: (A) a low rainfall erosivity factor, (B) a TMDL analysis, or (C) an equivalent analysis that determines allocations for small construction sites are not needed. Each operator, otherwise needing permit coverage, must notify EPA of its intention for a waiver. It is the responsibility of those individuals wishing to obtain a waiver from coverage under this general permit to submit a complete and accurate waiver certification as described below. Where the operator changes or another is added during the construction project, the new operator must also submit a waiver certification to be waived.

A. Rainfall Erosivity Waiver

Under this scenario the small construction project's rainfall erosivity factor calculation ("R" in the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation) is less than 5 during the period of construction activity. The operator must certify to EPA that construction activity will occur only when the rainfall erosivity factor is less than 5. The period of construction activity begins at initial earth disturbance and ends with final stabilization. Where vegetation will be used for final stabilization, the date of installation of a stabilization practice that will provide interim non-vegetative stabilization can be used for the end of the construction period, provided the operator commits (as a condition of waiver eligibility) to periodically inspect and properly maintain the area until the criteria for final stabilization as defined in the construction general permit have been met. If use of this interim stabilization eligibility condition was relied on to qualify for the waiver, signature on the waiver with its certification statement constitutes acceptance of and commitment to complete the final stabilization process. The operator must submit a waiver certification to EPA prior to commencing construction activities.

> *Note: The rainfall erosivity factor "R" is determined in accordance with Chapter 2 of Agriculture Handbook Number 703, Predicting Soil Erosion by Water: A Guide to Conservation Planning With the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE), pages 21–64, dated January 1997; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service.*

EPA has developed an online rainfall erosivity calculator to help small construction sites determine potential eligibility for the rainfall erosivity waiver. You can access the calculator from EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/lew. The R factor can easily be calculated by using the construction site latitude/longitude or address and estimated start and end dates of construction. This calculator may also be useful in determining the time periods during which construction activity could be waived from permit coverage. You may find that moving your construction activity by a few weeks or expediting site stabilization will allow you to qualify for the waiver. Use this online calculator or the Construction Rainfall Erosivity Waiver Fact Sheet

(www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/fact3-1.pdf) to assist in determining the R Factor for your small construction site.

If you are the operator of the construction activity and eligible for a waiver based on low erosivity potential, you can submit a rainfall erosivity waiver electronically via EPA's eNOI system (www.epa.gov/npdes/eNOI) or provide the following information on the waiver certification form in order to be waived from permitting requirements:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the construction site operators;
2. Name (or other identifier), address, county or similar governmental subdivision, and latitude/longitude of the construction project or site;
3. Estimated construction start and completion (i.e., final stabilization) dates, and total acreage (to the nearest quarter acre) to be disturbed;
4. The rainfall erosivity factor calculation that applies to the active construction phase at your project site; and
5. A statement, signed and dated by an authorized representative as provided in Appendix L, Subsection L.11, which certifies that the construction activity will take place during a period when the value of the rainfall erosivity factor is less than five.

You can access the waiver certification form from EPA's website at: (http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/construction_waiver_form.pdf). Paper copies of the form must be sent to one of the addresses listed in Part D of this section.

Note: If the R factor is 5 or greater, you cannot apply for the rainfall erosivity waiver, and must apply for NPDES permit coverage, unless you qualify for the Water Quality Waiver as described below.

If your small construction project continues beyond the projected completion date given on the waiver certification, you must recalculate the rainfall erosivity factor for the new project duration. If the R factor is below five (5), you must update all applicable information on the waiver certification and retain a copy of the revised waiver as part of your SWPPP. The new waiver certification must be submitted prior to the projected completion date listed on the original waiver form to assure your exemption from permitting requirements is uninterrupted. If the new R factor is five (5) or above, you must obtain NPDES permit coverage.

B. TMDL Waiver

This waiver is available if EPA has established or approved a TMDL that addresses the pollutant(s) of concern for the impaired water and has determined that controls on stormwater discharges from small construction activity are not needed to protect water quality. The pollutant(s) of concern include sediment (such as total suspended solids, turbidity or siltation) and any other pollutant that has been identified as a cause of impairment of any water body that will receive a discharge from the construction activity. Information on TMDLs that have been established or approved by EPA is available from EPA online at http://www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/ and from state and tribal water quality agencies.

If you are the operator of the construction activity and eligible for a waiver based on compliance with an EPA-established or approved TMDL, you must provide the following information on the Waiver Certification form in order to be waived from permitting requirements:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the construction site operator(s);
2. Name (or other identifier), address, county or similar governmental subdivision, and latitude/longitude of the construction project or site;

3. Estimated construction start and completion (i.e., final stabilization) dates, and total acreage (to the nearest quarter acre) to be disturbed;
4. The name of the water body(s) that would be receiving stormwater discharges from your construction project;
5. The name and approval date of the TMDL;
6. A statement, signed and dated by an authorized representative as provided in Appendix L, Subsection L.11, that certifies that the construction activity will take place and that the stormwater discharges will occur, within the drainage area addressed by the TMDL.

C. Equivalent Analysis Waiver

This waiver is available for non-impaired waters only. The operator can develop an equivalent analysis that determines allocations for his/her small construction site for the pollutant(s) of concern or determines that such allocations are not needed to protect water quality. This waiver requires a small construction operator to develop an equivalent analysis based on existing in-stream concentrations, expected growth in pollutant concentrations from all sources, and a margin of safety.

If you are a construction operator who wants to use this waiver, you must develop your equivalent analysis and provide the following information to be waived from permitting requirements:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the construction site operator(s);
2. Name (or other identifier), address, county or similar governmental subdivision, and latitude/longitude of the construction project or site;
3. Estimated construction start and completion (i.e., final stabilization) dates, and total acreage (to the nearest quarter acre) to be disturbed;
4. The name of the water bodies that would be receiving stormwater discharges from your construction project;
5. Your equivalent analysis;
6. A statement, signed and dated by an authorized representative as provided in Appendix L, Subsection L.11, that certifies that the construction activity will take place and that the stormwater discharges will occur, within the drainage area addressed by the equivalent analysis.

D. Waiver Deadlines and Submissions

1. Waiver certifications must be submitted prior to commencement of construction activities.
2. If you submit a TMDL or equivalent analysis waiver request, you are not waived until EPA approves your request. As such, you may not commence construction activities until receipt of approval from EPA.
3. Late Notifications: Operators are not prohibited from submitting waiver certifications after initiating clearing, grading, excavation activities, or other construction activities. The Agency reserves the right to take enforcement for any unpermitted discharges that occur between the time construction commenced and waiver authorization is granted.

Submittal of a waiver certification is an optional alternative to obtaining permit coverage for discharges of stormwater associated with small construction activity, provided you qualify for the waiver. Any discharge of stormwater associated with small construction activity not covered by either a permit or a waiver may be considered an unpermitted discharge under the Clean Water Act. As mentioned above, EPA reserves the right to take enforcement for any unpermitted discharges that occur between the time construction commenced and either discharge authorization is granted or a complete and accurate waiver certification is submitted. EPA may notify any operator covered by a waiver that they must apply for a permit. EPA may notify any operator who has been in non-compliance with a waiver that they may no longer use the waiver for future projects. Any member of the public may petition EPA to take action under this provision by submitting written notice along with supporting justification.

Complete an accurate Rainfall Erosivity waiver certifications not otherwise submitted electronically via EPA's eNOI system (www.epa.gov/npdes/eNOI) must be sent to one of the following addresses:

Regular U.S. Mail Delivery
EPA Stormwater Notice Processing Center
Mail Code 4203M
U.S. EPA
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Overnight/Express Mail Delivery
EPA Stormwater Notice Processing Center
Room 7420
U.S. EPA
1201Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Complete and accurate TMDL or equivalent analysis waiver requests must be sent to the applicable EPA Region office specified in Appendix B.