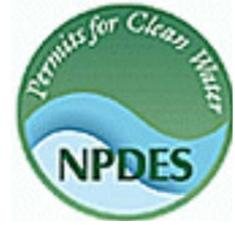


United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Water
Office of Wastewater Management
Water Permits Division



October 2010



Questions and Answers

Listening Session to Gather Public Input on the Next Vessel General Permit

What Is the Purpose of the *Federal Register* Notice?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing plans to hold a listening session on December 15, 2010, to obtain suggestions from the public for improving the next Vessel General Permit (VGP). The listening session will be held in the EPA East Building at 1201 Constitution Ave. NW, Room 1153, Washington, DC 20004 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The VGP is a Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that authorizes, on a nationwide basis, discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessels, as specified in Part 1.2.2 of the 2008 VGP. EPA seeks the views of the interested public on requirements currently contained in the 2008 VGP and any changes or additions recommended for the next VGP. The 2008 VGP expires on December 19, 2013, and EPA has begun the process of developing the next VGP.

Why Is the *Federal Register* Notice Necessary?

The Agency has started research for the next Vessel General Permit. As part of this effort, EPA is holding a listening session. The *Federal Register* notice serves as an additional opportunity for the public to comment or provide relevant information for development of the next VGP.

What Kind of Vessel Permitting Issues is the Agency Seeking Public Input On?

In addition to generally requesting recommended changes for any aspect of the next VGP, in order to maximize the quality of the next VGP, EPA is requesting comment on the following:

- 1) Were parts of the 2008 VGP confusing? Do certain sections need to provide additional guidance?
- 2) Are there any guidances, supporting documentation, or other communication strategies that you would recommend EPA develop to help vessel owner/operators better understand and comply with the next VGP? If so, please suggest your approaches.
- 3) Did the 2008 VGP accurately identify and capture all the discharge categories of discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel in the vessel universe? Are there additional discharge categories EPA should explore for the next VGP?

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- 4) Are there effluent limitations or best management practices in the 2008 VGP you would recommend revising and if so, what are your suggestions?
- 5) Are there reporting, monitoring, and inspection requirements you would recommend revising, and if so, what are your suggestions? Are there additional forms or guidances EPA should consider in assisting permittees in meeting their reporting, monitoring, and inspections requirements?
- 6) Did EPA accurately identify and capture additional requirements needed for specific vessel classes and if not, what are your suggestions? Are there additional specific vessel classes EPA should explore for the next VGP and why?
- 7) Are there additional federal, state, or international permits, rules, or guidances EPA should consider using to inform decisions for the next VGP and why?

What If I Cannot Attend the Listening Session?

If you cannot attend the listening session, you can submit your comments identified by EPA Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2010-0828 by one of the following methods by December 31, 2010:

- Online at www.regulations.gov: Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.
- Email: ow-docket@epa.gov. Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2010-0828
- Mail: Water Docket Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode: 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460, Attention Docket ID No. OW-2010-0828.
- Hand Delivery: Water Docket, EPA Docket Center, EPA West Building Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460, ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2010-0828. Such deliveries are only accepted during the docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information.

Where Can I Find Additional Information?

For additional information, contact Robin Danesi, Water Permits Division, by phone at 202-564-1846 or via e-mail at CommercialVesselPermit@epa.gov or contact Shirley Fan, Water Permits Division, by phone at 202-564-2425 or via e-mail at CommercialVesselPermit@epa.gov.

For more information on the vessels program or to view the *Federal Register* notice, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels>.