



GET THE NEWS!

Massachusetts Stormwater News is a collaborative effort of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the New England office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). This newsletter will be sent via email every few months to provide information related to the Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit to municipalities and others. MA Stormwater News will feature topics of interest, provide updates on upcoming permit deadlines, and highlight assistance resources from MassDEP, U.S. EPA, and others.

U.S. EPA and MassDEP know that stormwater management is just one of the many challenges municipalities face. We are committed to working with municipalities as you move forward on permit implementation.

This edition highlights results from the 2019 Annual Report Reviews.

The Results Are In! Highlights from 2019 Annual Reports

Every fall, EPA and MassDEP look forward to receiving Annual Reports of the 2016 Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. This permit regulates stormwater discharges from about 75% of Massachusetts municipalities and other facilities in the Commonwealth. The MS4 Annual Report must be submitted annually to EPA and MassDEP by September 30th. We appreciate the 87% of permittees in MA that submitted reports on time this past year, many of which used our new templates. Annual Reports provide key information to EPA, MassDEP, and the public regarding the effectiveness of local stormwater management programs.

The strongest areas of reported compliance included the following themes:

- 98% made records available to the public
- 97% completed street sweeping
- 95% started public education efforts
- 95% followed catch basin cleaning and street sweeping disposal procedures
- 91% completed their Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) plan

These results provide a good starting point towards full compliance with the permit requirements. Seeing the actions MS4 communities are taking to raise public awareness is reassuring because educating the public is one of the best ways to get residents involved in stormwater management. Raising awareness allows residents to understand local issues and take active steps in implementing changes that can have a meaningful impact on the environment and public health. Important public actions range from proper disposal of dog waste to the proper disposal and storage of industrial materials.



Clogged catch basins can lead to street flooding and release pollutants into receiving waters. Credit: L. Schiffman

We were especially pleased to see high reports of catch basin cleanings and street sweeping. With catch basins being the direct collection of all potential stormwater pollutants in MS4 areas, keeping them clean is one of the best ways to reduce pollution to receiving waters. MS4s' efforts across the Commonwealth to manage stormwater produce environmental results locally and statewide, and accurate annual reporting allows EPA to track, quantify, and share this impact.

EPA's annual report review also identified areas for improvement. The lowest areas of reported compliance for MA MS4s were completing priority outfall ranking, developing an IDDE ordinance, inspecting stormwater treatment structures, developing and adhering to site plan protocols and review processes, and providing annual IDDE training. Most of these components fall under the IDDE program, whose goal is to eliminate non-stormwater discharges from the MS4 system. Non-stormwater discharges such as illicit connections, runoff that otherwise contains high loads of bacteria/pathogens, nutrients, heavy metals, and oil and grease, or sediments that come off construction sites, are not meant to enter the MS4. Developing written procedures for construction site plan review sets up MS4s to oversee development activities in sensitive urban watersheds and prevents potential water quality impairments. Stormwater ordinances with components of the IDDE plan, structured inspection schedules, and on-time maintenance of outfalls can prevent potential pollution of water bodies.

We found that inspections were not often reported in Annual Reports. Taking time to make sure that any information gathered during inspections is updated into outfall maps or protocols will improve performance by ensuring that knowledge of the system is current and complete. Planning, strategizing, and prioritizing community-specific actions will set the stage for more time- and cost-effective implementation of future permit activities.

Focus on Catch Basins

Catch basins are an important part of municipal stormwater infrastructure, and stormwater managers play a critical role in maintenance. In FY2019, about 87% of Massachusetts MS4 communities reported inspecting catch basins totaling 12,377 inspections statewide, removing over 33,922 cubic yards of material. These results are only a starting point, representing a fraction of the catch basins across the Commonwealth, and EPA hopes to report further improvements in the coming years.

The MS4 permit requires that no catch basin at any time be more than 50 percent full. More frequent inspections and regular cleanouts are necessary to ensure that this requirement is met. Optimizing catch basin inspections and routine cleaning prevents the accumulation of material - sediment, debris, and polluted water - allowing stormwater to flow through and be treated. Tracking the number of inspections and the volume of materials removed can help prioritize where to inspect and report results from cleaning procedures. Sharing results can inform your community of cost-effective measures to develop a better routine and cleaning schedules that meet community needs and adhere to permit requirements.



*Open-curb inlets (A) can become collection systems for floatables and (B) other potential harmful pollutants during high flow events.
Credit: T. Maguire*

Make the Annual Report data work for you!

EPA appreciates the effort required to prepare 2019 Annual Reports and encourages all communities to use the metrics requested as a tool to track progress in meeting permit requirements and evaluate the effectiveness of local stormwater management programs. These metrics allow stormwater managers to efficiently aggregate environmental data that can reveal program strengths and identify areas for improvement. For communities that need to elaborate on a specific annual reporting requirement, it is important to be honest and provide detailed information whenever possible. The textboxes provided under each section offer flexibility to explain unique and special circumstances. When more detailed and complete information is reported, EPA and MassDEP can more easily measure impact statewide. Complete reports allow EPA and MassDEP to showcase the successes of MS4 programs and highlight the work communities are doing to improve water quality.

EPA acknowledges that reporting templates were issued late in the fiscal year and may have been challenging for communities to use. EPA is working to improve the template based on feedback and hopes to release the template earlier this year. If you have ideas or suggestions for training or assistance related to Annual Reports, please email your ideas to StormwaterNewsMA@epa.gov.



Sediment and erosion plans at construction sites prevent solids from washing off a site and entering a catch basin, potentially clogging it. Engaging concerned neighbors in an "adopt-a-catch basin" program can help keep areas around catch basins clear and allow them to properly function. Credit: L. Langley

IDDE Results & Upcoming Requirements

Only a handful of communities reported detailed results in how they are implementing their IDDE programs. Over the past reporting period, MS4s statewide reported removing 65 illicit discharges. For example, MS4s in the Mystic River Watershed reported removing 19 illicit discharges, preventing at least 4,400 gallons of sewage per day from entering the Mystic River. EPA will continue to track annual progress with the information included in future reports.

As of December 2019, all permittees, with the exception of new permittees, should have completed their Written Catchment Investigation Procedure. This document sets an important foundation for the subsequent requirement – going out into the field to start investigating the catchments according to the priority ranking. Similarly, the upcoming requirement to complete the Phase I System Map will generate an important planning tool that will support future implementation of permit requirements. A comprehensive, clear, and accurate map of a MS4's stormwater system helps decision-makers easily plan and prioritize outfall screenings and investigations, allowing them to make informed resource allocation decisions.

For detailed guidance on IDDE program requirements, please [click here](#) for the past April 2019 edition of Stormwater News.

EPA Administrative Compliance Orders Focus on Ordinances

Ordinances are a foundational element of an effective Stormwater Management Program providing the authority for a permittee to fully implement and ensure compliance with the IDDE, Construction/ Sediment and Erosion Control, and Post-Construction Stormwater Management programs under the MS4 permit. EPA recently issued several Administrative Compliance Orders requiring Massachusetts towns to adopt the ordinances or regulatory authorities required by the 2003 MS4 permit by June 30, 2020. The 2016 MS4 permit continues to require that permittees have adequate legal authority to implement these programs.

MassDEP MS4 Municipal Assistance Grants

The Baker-Polito Administration awarded \$300,000 in grants to five stormwater coalitions across the Commonwealth to help local cities and towns meet existing and upcoming stormwater management requirements. The funding enables groups of Massachusetts municipalities to expand their efforts to meet requirements under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, issued jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and MassDEP, and reduce stormwater pollution through coordinated partnerships that emphasize resource sharing.

The groups receiving awards are:

Statewide Stormwater Coalition – \$107,795

This project will further expand the “Think Blue Massachusetts” statewide stormwater public awareness and education campaign that helps each MS4 community meet MS4 education and outreach requirements. The proposed project includes expanded advertising to build awareness and brand recognition, messaging for certain impaired waters, an interactive social media contest, planning for a Think Blue Massachusetts symposium, and training.

Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition (CMRSWC) – \$28,000

This project offers workshops to meet the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination training requirement for CMRSWC members and additional MS4 communities.

Southeast Regional Stormwater Coalition (SRWC) – \$55,000

This project will offer workshops to up to 20 towns in which both SRSC communities and others would develop their required Operation and Maintenance Plans for Parks and Open Space, Buildings and Facilities, Vehicles and Equipment and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans.

Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative – \$62,504

This project will develop a bylaw/ordinance and regulations and permit-tracking materials to address construction site runoff control and post construction stormwater management at development and redevelopment sites, as required by the 2016 MS4 Permit by June 30, 2020.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy for Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative – \$46,700

This project will outfit and customize an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination utility trailer for use by the eight Buzzards Bay municipalities; and includes training for municipal staff, Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) staff and MMA Co-op students.

Funding Municipal Stormwater Management

Many communities in Massachusetts have established Stormwater Enterprise Funds to cover the annual expenditures needed to fulfill the requirements of the MS4 permit. Instead of relying on a community’s general fund to clean catch basins, carry out IDDE testing, and conduct annual training requirements, towns are increasingly seeing value in having a standalone budget for stormwater. In the last edition of the Stormwater News, readers learned how Ashland set up its Stormwater Enterprise Fund. Ashland is now among 21 communities in the Commonwealth that have Stormwater Enterprise Funds. Since the 2016 MS4 permit has gone into effect, the number of towns that have Stormwater Enterprise Funds has doubled. If your town is interested in establishing an enterprise fund for stormwater management, refer to [this list](#) of towns that have established these funds to learn about different rate structures.

Think Blue Massachusetts

is a statewide educational campaign run by the Massachusetts Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition to help residents and businesses do their part to reduce polluted runoff and keep Massachusetts lakes, rivers, and streams clean and healthy. Learn more at thinkbluemassachusetts.org



Additional Assistance Resources from EPA and MassDEP

EPA Stormwater Tools in New England Website

- Find the latest tools, resources, and updates on upcoming training opportunities: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/stormwater-tools-new-england>
- Past editions of Stormwater News: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/massachusetts-small-ms4-general-permit#toolsinfolinks>

MassDEP Stormwater Website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stormwater>

Upcoming Webinars

- Monday, June 1st, 11:00-12:00pm EST: Information Session: MA MS4 General Permit Draft Modifications: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1110292745681306639>

Soak Up the Rain Webinars

Please register at: <https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-new-england-webinar-series>

- Thursday, June 11th, 1:00-2:30pm EST: Community Buy-in for Stormwater Funding: An EPA Roundtable Series
- Wednesday, July 8th, 1:00-2:30pm EST: Brownfields and Green Infrastructure, Ferrous Site Park
- Tuesday, July 28th, 1:00-2:30pm EST: Resilient Summer on Cape Cod: Porous Asphalt in Downtown Provincetown

Public Education and Outreach Program

- The MS4 Permit requires each town to implement a public education and outreach program that reaches four different audiences and includes messages that are most relevant to that community. Town officials can click on MassDEP's link below to download – and save – brochures, pamphlets and other materials and use those to help comply with Section 2.3.2.c of the MS4 permit: <https://go.usa.gov/x5dgr>

For MS4 training and assistance for your community, call MassDEP's Stormwater Coordinator Laura Schifman at 617-556-1157.

Important News:

The 2016 Massachusetts List of Impaired Waters has been published! Find more information on 303d List here: <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/massachusetts-2016-303d-list-and-related-documents>

EPA released proposed MA MS4 Permit modifications for public comment on April 23, 2020. More information can be found [here](#) on EPA's Massachusetts MS4 website. Comments can be submitted on regulations.gov at the following web address: https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA_FRDOC_0001-25335.

Contacts

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Massachusetts Stormwater News is a collaborative effort of MassDEP and the New England office of the U.S. EPA. Suggestions for future topics, questions or assistance, or requests to be added or removed from the Stormwater News mailing list can be sent to: StormwaterNewsMA@epa.gov.