



## FAQs: 401 Certification Turbidity Monitoring Requirements

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Applicable to EPA's 2012 Construction Stormwater General Permit (CGP)

### **When am I required to conduct turbidity monitoring?**

Turbidity monitoring is required when there is a direct discharge to a water body that is impaired due to sedimentation/siltation and *the construction site is not stabilized per Part 2.2 or shut down per Part 4.1.4.3 of the permit*. If the permittee can demonstrate that there will be no direct discharge from the construction site, then turbidity monitoring is not required.

### **Why is monitoring required?**

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires the state to review federal permits to ensure that they comply with state water quality standards. Idaho water quality standards require that turbidity "shall not exceed background turbidity by more than fifty (50) NTU instantaneously or more than twenty-five (25) NTU for more than ten (10) consecutive days" (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e). Monitoring is required to ensure that the turbidity standard is met.

### **How do I know if I'm discharging to a water body that is impaired due to sedimentation/siltation?**

Impaired waters are listed in Categories 4 and 5 of DEQ's Integrated Report. You must use the most current EPA-approved Integrated Report, available online at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/monitoring-assessment/integrated-report.aspx>. DEQ's webpage also has a link to the state's web-based Integrated Report, which presents this information in a searchable, map-based format at <http://mapcase.deq.idaho.gov/wq2010/>. DEQ regional staff can assist you in finding this information and in making an accurate determination.

### **If I discharge to a ditch, canal, or some other man-made water body, am I still responsible for conducting turbidity monitoring?**

Maybe. Man-made waters are still protected under the Clean Water Act and are given Tier 1 antidegradation protection under the state's Antidegradation Policy. Turbidity monitoring may be required if DEQ determines that it is necessary (e.g., if there is a clear connection to an impaired water). The permittee is also responsible for obtaining permission to discharge from the owner/operator of the water conveyance system.

**What if I am discharging to an MS4?**

If you discharge to an MS4 (a municipal separate stormwater sewer system), you are required to comply with the MS4 permit and with Idaho’s water quality standards. Your best management practices must ensure that the turbidity standard is met at the point of discharge. Monitoring at the outfall of the MS4 will not be necessary. You are also required to contact the MS4 permittee to obtain permission to discharge to their system.

**If there is no discharge from my site and all of my best management practices are operating effectively, do I still need to conduct turbidity monitoring?**

No.

**Is there any other time when I might be required to conduct turbidity monitoring?**

Maybe. If EPA and DEQ decide, during the review of your notice of intent (NOI), that the selected best management practices may not achieve water quality standards, then you may be required to monitor if you are discharging to a Tier 2 (“high-quality”) water body. EPA will notify the applicant if such a requirement is needed.

For questions or concerns regarding the information contained in this FAQ sheet, please contact Miranda Adams, 401/404 Program Coordinator, at (208) 373-0574 or at [miranda.adams@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:miranda.adams@deq.idaho.gov).