

What's Going On In Our Corner?

South Central Wisconsin MS4 Permittees



The MS4 Permit Standard

MS4 permit conditions are developed to meet the MS4 permit standard: reduce pollutants to the maximum extent practicable (MEP), protect local water quality and meet CWA standards. MS4 permittees satisfy the MS4 permit standard by complying with their permit and successfully implementing the stormwater management programs.

Stormwater quality is impacted by various urban activities. While many of these activities occur in every community, the extent of these activities and the practices needed to mitigate impacts from these activities varies.

Additionally, although practices used to mitigate stormwater pollutants may be the same throughout communities, implementation can vary, affecting effectiveness. For example, Community A and Community B experience similar volumes of traffic and, therefore, pollutants. Although both communities implement the same street sweeping practices (e.g., equipment, frequency and timing), Community A allows cars to park on the street while Community B does not. Community A may not be able to sweep the curb line, making its street-sweeping efforts less effective. Consequently, to reduce pollutants to the MEP, Community A may have to implement additional practices.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

Street Sweeping Practices

Every day, all day long, streets accumulate debris. In the winter, it's salt and snow; in fall, its leaves and during the warm months, not only do plants drop seeds, but flowers, berries, branches, and grass clippings are blown on the street and brush/yard waste seems to appear out of nowhere. Of course, this is in addition to other pollutants like those affiliated with traffic and littering. All of which is waiting for the storm to wash it away. Unless you get there first.

Yes, there are other Best Management Practices (BMPs), but let's talk about street sweeping. Since sweeping is such a common, well-known practice, it can be difficult to have ground-breaking ideas for improvement. However, based on comments we've heard, here are some reminders and tips:

"If they sweep, how come the roads are still dirty?"

Reminder: Since debris accumulates in the curb line, it is important to sweep there.

Tip: If parked cars prevent sweeping the curb line, consider parking regulations. If your parking regulations vary (e.g., during the week parking is alternate side, during the weekend parking is both sides), sweep when the curb line is accessible.

"I don't think they sweep streets. I've never seen a sweeper."

Reminder: Street sweeping often occurs at night so residents may not be aware the street was swept. Also, if the curb line is not adequately swept, residents may not realize any street sweeping occurred.

Tip: Inform residents when sweeping occurs (e.g., website, social media, mailers) and use the opportunity to provide information such as alternate side parking regulations that are in place to facilitate proper street sweeping.

"The roads look so clean after the rain!"

Reminder: If roads are noticeably cleaner after the rain, this may indicate sweeping practices need improvement.

Tip: Consider ways to improve sweeping practices such as sweeping more frequently, sweeping prior to rain events or implementing parking regulations to access the curb line.

Topics

p.1 Street Sweeping Practices,
A Reminder Of The MS4 Permit
Standard

p.2 Dry Weather Field
Screenings, Residential
Services For Yard Waste

p.3 Upcoming Dates,
Reminders And Events

Illicit Discharge Detection And Elimination: Dry Weather Outfall Screenings

Dry Weather Outfall Screenings? Dry weather stormwater outfall screenings remain an effective way to identify illicit discharges or connections. Since flow should not be present during dry weather, determining the source of flow is critical to determine if the flow is illicit. Typically, “dry weather” is 48-72 hours after a rain event. However, based on the precipitation event and size of the drainage area, this time may vary.

What is considered flow? Often, it’s obvious if flow is present. However, sometimes flow is more difficult to determine. Overall, if flow is questionable, investigate upstream of the stormwater outfall to determine if flow is present. If so, test the flow at that upstream location for pollutant parameters required by your MS4 permit.



Standing water at outfall during dry weather. Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

Outfalls located within a low area allow stormwater to pool.

Consequently, standing stormwater may be mistaken for flow. If standing stormwater is present, investigate upstream of the outfall. If flow is present upstream, test the flow at this upstream location.

It may be difficult or impossible to determine flow at outfalls that are fully or partially submerged by receiving waters or located within enclosed waterways. Like the example above, investigation must occur upstream of the outfall to determine flow.

In areas with high groundwater, flow may be questionable. To avoid testing groundwater, screenings should be avoided during times of high groundwater, such as early spring. However, as with the examples above, investigation should occur upstream of the outfall to determine flow.

Residential Services For Yard Waste

Yard waste piles can concentrate nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that could runoff into nearby waterways or be conveyed to storm sewers. Because of this, communities may offer pick-up services or residential drop-off areas for yard waste. Offering these types of services can help manage materials better and prevent excess nutrients from entering the environment.

However, it is important that residents are made aware of how to stage their yard waste materials before picking up. For example, instructing residents to pile their yard wastes on the terrace versus in the street or gutter if possible.

Additionally, if your community offers residential drop-off, the placement of yard waste piles is important. Here are some questions a community should consider to reduce polluted stormwater runoff:

Is the pile stored on a slope? What is the proximity to a storm sewer(s), waterways or wetlands? Could the pile be stored on pervious surface instead of impervious? Is it possible to store the pile in an enclosed space (e.g., canopy, 3-sided bay)?

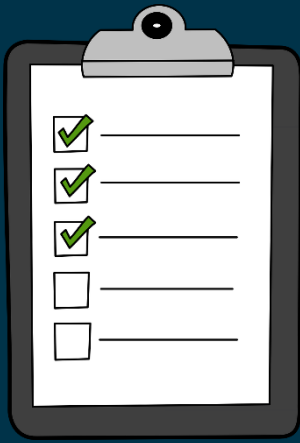
Major, Minor And Priority Outfalls

Major and minor outfalls are based on pipe or drainage area size. For an outfall to be considered major, it must meet one of the criteria listed in [s. NR 216.002\(16\)](#). Outfalls that do not meet these criteria are considered minor.

Since major outfalls serve large drainage areas, the likelihood of illicit discharges looks greater. As such, MS4 permits continue to require screening major outfalls. However, results have shown screenings should not solely be based on size. Consequently, MS4 permits have included screening requirements for minor and priority outfalls.

Though a priority outfall may fit the definition of a major outfall, priority outfalls should be based on illicit discharge potential in the contributing drainage. Characteristics that should be considered include history of known/suspected illicit discharges, sections of storm and/or sanitary sewer that have exceeded/approaching their design life, contributing drainage areas with 80%+ imperviousness, business with frequent changes in property ownership or operations, etc.

Lastly, although the MS4 permittee determines its own priority outfalls, MS4 outfalls should routinely re-evaluated.



Want To Be Featured In The MS4 Fall Edition?

We want to hear about your municipality's success stories and practical procedures.

Please reach out to Wisconsin DNR stormwater staff with stories to include in upcoming editions:

Sean Spencer

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or

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Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

Save The Date! Wisconsin Stormwater Week Is Back, Sept. 21-29, 2024

Stormwater Week is an awareness campaign that aims to inform, educate, and engage Wisconsin residents on the topic of stormwater pollution prevention through shared, consistent messaging. Each weekday of Wisconsin Stormwater Week focuses on different aspects of stormwater pollution prevention. [Find useful content such as webinars, social media posts and more.](#)

Get Tips On Dealing With Certain Invasive Plants

A quick primer on four common invasives, how to recognize them on the landscape and how to handle them when you do. For details on these and the 100-plus other terrestrial plants listed as invasive under Wisc. Admin. Code NR 40, check the [Invasive Species Master Resource Table](#). Or read [the article](#).

Storm Water Permit Viewer

Need to see what active construction sites with DNR permits are within your community? Or maybe you are curious to see where permitted stormwater industrial facilities are located? The [Storm Water Permit Viewer](#) provides an interactive map to explore active WPDES Stormwater Permits and much more. Select "Show Layers" in the top left corner to select different layers.

Great Lakes Basin River Water-Quality Trends

[This dashboard](#) summarizes water quality information for tributaries of the Great Lakes in the United States. Nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment concentrations are measured monthly 24 rivers that flow into the Great Lakes.

2024 Surface Water Grant Applicant Guide And Program Guidance Now Available Online

The 2024 Surface Water Grant applicant guide and program guidance documents are now available for review on the DNR's [Surface Water Grants webpage](#). Additionally, a NEW [recorded introductory webinar for new applicants](#) is available on the Surface Water Grants webpage. Pre-applications are due Sept. 15, 2024.