

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit

2013-2018

Clark County is committed to protecting our water resources

February 2013



**For more information
about the Clean Water
Program:**

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Clark County's Department of Environmental Services (DES) provides a service to our citizens to protect our surface and groundwater resources. We value the high quality water resources that support our drinking water supply, provide critical habitat for protected wildlife, and support a wide range of recreational opportunities.

Clark County was recently issued a new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from Washington State's Department of Ecology (as part of the federal Clean Water Act). The permit describes the regulations and practices to manage stormwater runoff from development to protect our natural resources.

While the permit requires us to change some of our current business practices over the next few years, there are many benefits of the new permit:

- The preferred stormwater management approach will use *Low Impact Development* (LID) which will increase the number of features you see throughout our community, including rain gardens, planted bio-swales and permeable pavements.
- Reduce the size and number of fenced stormwater ponds.
- The new LID features will increase the aesthetics of our neighborhoods as we preserve native vegetation, as well as add trees, shrubs and flowers in rain gardens and bioswales.
- New features will increase green corridors throughout our community that will add wildlife benefits while protecting stormwater.
- New stormwater designs will allow water to soak into the ground at the site which will reduce erosion of creeks downstream.

What is the extent of our stormwater system?

- *Clark County operates approximately 870 stormwater sites*
- *The stormwater systems includes approximately 400 miles of pipes*
- *The stormwater system includes over 190 filter facilities that contain over 1,600 filter cartridges*
- *The total stormwater sewer systems includes over 170,000 assets such as inlets, culverts, manholes, and pipes*
- *Staff inspects all of our facilities regularly as well as over 1,020 privately-owned stormwater facilities a year*





Where will there be changes in stormwater control in Clark County with the new permit?

Throughout our community, we'll see required changes in facilities to protect water quality and reduce runoff flows that could lead to pollution, flooding and erosion.

New developments, including businesses:

Dirt, oil, and debris that collect in parking lots and paved areas can be washed into the storm sewer system and eventually enter local waterbodies.

- *Updates to Title 40 will provide new design requirements for low impact developments that will reduce runoff from sites.*
- *Design manuals will be revised to simplify the application process for new developments.*
- *The County will continue to provide technical assistance to local businesses to manage their properties and facilities to minimize potential for polluted runoff.*

Construction sites:

Erosion controls that aren't maintained can cause excessive amounts of dirt and debris to be carried into the stormwater system. Construction vehicles can leak fuel, oil, and other harmful fluids that can be picked up by stormwater and deposited into local waterbodies.

- *Clark County Development Code will be updated to ensure that protection measures will be utilized for construction sites to minimize impact to downstream waterways.*

What is a "municipal separate storm sewer system" (MS4)?

Clark County owns and maintains a storm water system that captures the rain runoff from properties such as houses, businesses and roads. This system of facilities is separate from the sanitary system that handles waste water from facilities such as septic systems.

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Residential sites:

Residential sites have the potential to contribute to water quality pollution including improper application of lawn care products, leaking septic systems, care washing techniques, pest waste and runoff from impervious surfaces such as soiled driveways.

- *The permit requires the County to educate residents on proper care of their homes to minimize impacts to the amount of water and the quality as it leaves a property.*

Agricultural properties:

Lack of vegetation on streambanks can lead to erosion. Overgrazed pastures can also contribute excessive amounts of sediment to local waterbodies. Excess fertilizers and pesticides can poison aquatic animals and lead to destructive algae blooms. Livestock in streams can contaminate waterways with bacteria, making them unsafe for human contact.

- *Educational programs for small acreage properties will continue to assist citizens to minimize their impact on water quality, including fencing for animals and proper material storage.*

Information provided by Clark County and the EPA. Additional information will be provided on the Clark County website. Visit our Green Business and Green Neighbor programs for more information about what you can do to protect stormwater in our community.

