

Questions and Answers

1. General Questions

1.1 “Do the Guidelines apply to certain geographical areas, dischargers, or types of projects?”

A: The Wastewater Ordinance and Guidelines apply to all permitted users who discharge to the sanitary sewer within the Sanitation Districts’ service area. The Sanitation Districts may grant exceptions on a limited, case-by-case basis in accordance with the Guidelines.

1.2 “If my facility connects to a local sewer not owned or operated by the Sanitation Districts, am I subject to these Guidelines?”

A: Industrial Waste Discharge Permits are issued jointly by the Sanitation Districts and the local agency responsible for the local sewers tributary to the Sanitation Districts’ systems. Accordingly, any new, renewed, amended, or revised application for service must be submitted through the local agency for approval before final approval by the Sanitation Districts. Any facility, whether discharging directly to a Sanitation Districts’ sewer or a local sewer tributary to these sewers, is subject to the requirements in the Guidelines.

1.3 “If my facility is not approved to discharge impounded stormwater or roof drainage to the sanitary sewer, what other options exist?”

A: The Sanitation Districts’ Industrial Waste Discharge Permit is issued under the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to dischargers to the sanitary sewer system only. Any stormwater water that is discharged and/or disposed of offsite must meet the water quality standards set by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and other regulatory agencies.

2. Form of Attestation and Submittal Checklist

2.1 “If I have a permitted site that does not discharge stormwater, are we required to take any action? For example, submit the Form of Attestation?”

A: Yes. Any site that discharges industrial waste to the sanitary sewer, whether permitted or not, should submit the Form of Attestation.

2.2 “If I attest that my facility complies with the requirements listed in the Form of Attestation, do I need to submit the Submittal Checklist?”

A: No. If a company attests that comply with the requirements specified in the Form of Attestation, there is no need to submit the Submittal Checklist.

2.3 “What happens if the Form of Attestation is not submitted or contains incorrect information?”

A: Failure to submit the Form of Attestation will not result in a penalty or invalidate an Industrial Waste Discharge Permit. Any facility found to be in non-conformance with the Guidelines through the Sanitation District annual inspection program will be required to comply by the September 1, 2026 milestone date. Therefore, identifying any deficiencies early will allow more time for a company to comply and gain any required regulatory or building approvals.

2.4 “When must the Form of Attestation and Submittal Checklist be submitted?”

A: The Form of Attestation should be submitted within 30 days from receipt. The Submittal checklist should be submitted within 90 days from receipt.

2.5 “If a site has multiple Industrial Waste Discharge Permits, can separate Forms of Attestation be submitted for each permit number?”

A: Yes. The discharger should indicate the applicable permit on the Form of Attestation, and Submittal Checklist as applicable.

2.6 “If my facility has an Industrial Waste Discharge Permit and operates on a lease where the owner is responsible for managing stormwater drainage at the site, will the lessor receive the same documents?”

A: The Sanitation Districts issue Industrial Waste Discharge Permits to facilities that discharge wastewater, not property owners. Therefore, mailers that included the Letter, Fact Sheet, Form of Attestation, and Submittal checklist were only sent to permit holders.

2.7 “The Form of Attestation appears only to address areas less than 400 square feet previously exempt from permitting, and non-compliant rain switches. Does any indication need to be provided whether approved stormwater impound areas comply with the Guidelines?”

A: The Form of Attestation and associated compliance milestone date specifically apply to areas less than 400 square feet that were formerly exempted from permitting, and to the operation of rain switches controlling automatic diversion systems.

The discharger may indicate on the Submittal Checklist whether different areas of change in the Guidelines affect their Industrial Waste Discharge Permit and are not subject to the September 1, 2026 milestone date. Compliance evaluation for of all other changes in the Guidelines will be performed on a case-by-case basis, and the timeline for compliance will depend on the nature and complexity of the deficiency.

3. Permitted Daily Flow and Peak Flow

3.1 “Will a facility be allowed to discharge stormwater up to the flow rate approved in their Industrial Waste Discharge Permit?”

A: No. The Industrial Waste Discharge Permit, including peak flow limits, is for industrial wastewater discharge, not stormwater. Where a facility’s Industrial Waste Discharge Permit includes provisions for stormwater discharge via a rainwater diversion or impound system, the permit requirements for that discharge must be strictly followed. In all cases, industrial waste or stormwater discharges to the sanitary sewer shall not exceed the daily and peak flow limits specified in the facilities’ Industrial Waste Discharge Permit.

3.2 “If my facility is permitted with a maximum daily flow volume and peak flow rate, why is stormwater not allowed to be discharged up to the permitted limit beyond normal industrial waste flow?”

A: The permitted flow volume and peak flow rate are based on available capacity in the sewer conveyance and treatment system during dry weather conditions. While the sanitary sewer system is designed to accommodate projected flows from wastewater and industrial sources in our service area, it is not designed to function as a combined system with the storm sewer. Therefore, stormwater, especially during and shortly after rainfall-may cause hydraulic overloads.

3.3 “I have a drain exposed to rainfall that drains to the sanitary sewer, is less than 400 square feet, and therefore was formerly exempted from permitting. Does this exemption still apply?”

A: No. The discharge of stormwater to the sanitary sewer is now restricted for all areas, regardless of size. Sites that were formerly exempted from permitting by the Sanitation Districts due to exposed area(s) less than 400 square feet must now comply with the Guidelines within eighteen(18) months of receiving the Sanitation Districts’ notification package, including the letter, Attestation, Fact Sheet, and Submittal Checklist.

3.4 “If I collect stormwater from an area that is less than 400 square feet, can I send it to the onsite wastewater treatment system?”

A: No. Stormwater may only be discharged to the sanitary sewer if approved under an Industrial Waste Discharge Permit, even if it is treated onsite. Where a facility’s Industrial Waste Discharge Permit includes provisions for stormwater discharge via a rainwater diversion or impound system, the permit requirements for that discharge must be strictly followed.

4. Engineering Controls

4.1 “If a sample location required under the Industrial Waste Discharge Permit is currently exposed to rainfall, can a lid be installed to prevent stormwater from entering this location?”

A: Yes. Covering sample locations that are exposed to rainfall is acceptable, provided that sufficient access is maintained for Sanitation Districts’ staff, as prescribed in the permit-specific requirements issued with the Permit.

4.2 “If we have a rain switch associated with a rainwater diversion system that collects discharge from the roof, can the first 0.1” go to the sanitary sewer?”

A: No. Pursuant to the Guidelines §2.1.4, roof drains shall be routed to the storm drain. Roof drainage is, therefore, generally not allowed unless otherwise approved by the Sanitation Districts.

4.3 “If a cover or canopy is elected to be installed, what materials would be allowed?”

A: Roofing materials must be of solid construction, such as metal, fiberglass reinforced plastic, polycarbonate, composite materials, concrete, or tile. Fabric or woven polyethylene coverings are not acceptable (§2.1.1). Additional requirements are specified in the Guidelines.

5. Impounded Stormwater Discharge

5.1 “If I have a permitted site that is approved to impound stormwater beyond the first 0.1” of rainfall, when can I discharge this water?”

A: If a facility has been permitted to discharge impounded stormwater to the sanitary sewer, discharge must be in accordance with the requirements specified in its current Industrial Waste Discharge Permit. All facilities will be required to hold impounded stormwater for a minimum of 24 hours after the cessation of rain (§2.4.2). If an existing permit currently allows discharge sooner, it will be amended to reflect this requirement.

5.2 “Our facility processes impounded stormwater through our onsite wastewater treatment plant in accordance with our current Industrial Waste Discharge Permit. Are we in compliance?”

A: All impounded stormwater approved for discharge to the sanitary sewer must now be held for 24 hours after the cessation of rain (§2.4.2). Permits that previously allowed discharge before this holding period will be amended to incorporate this updated requirement specifying that discharge shall be held for 24 hours after cessation of rain (§2.4.2).

5.3 “If our facility reuses impounded stormwater to offset potable water use, are we allowed to discharge during wet weather?”

A: The Sanitation districts may allow the discharge of impounded stormwater on a limited case-by-case basis before 24 hours after the cessation of rainfall, provided engineering controls such as a calibrated flow meter are in place to ensure the wet-weather discharge flow rate does not exceed the company's normal dry-weather discharge flow rate. Additional flow monitoring equipment, such as telemetry, may also be required.

5.4 “If my facility pumps all impounded stormwater into an on-site wastewater treatment tank for processing and subsequently discharges through an approved flow meter, would we be able to discharge sooner than 24 hours after cessation of rain?”

A: No. Where a facility's Industrial Waste Discharge Permit includes provisions for stormwater discharge via a rainwater diversion or impound system, the permit requirements for that discharge must be strictly

followed. The Sanitation Districts may allow the discharge of impounded stormwater on a limited case-by-case basis before 24 hours after the cessation of rainfall, however this would need to be incorporated as a permit provision..

5.5 “If I am currently permitted to impound stormwater from process areas beyond secondary/spill containment, will this continue to be allowed?”

A: Facilities currently permitted to impound stormwater from areas beyond secondary or spill containment may continue to do so, provided all of the following conditions are met:

- *There are no hydraulic capacity concerns identified by the Sanitation Districts in the receiving or connecting sewers;*
- *The impounded stormwater is retained for at least 24 hours following the cessation of rain;*
- *The permitted area(s) are equipped with sufficient engineering controls to prevent run-on from adjacent unapproved areas or other non-approved tributaries, such as roof drainage;*
- *Any onsite testing conducted to assess whether the impounded waters can be discharged to a storm sewer shall be documented and made available for Sanitation Districts’ inspection.*

5.6 “Moving forward, will I be able to impound stormwater from areas beyond approved secondary/spill containment areas? Additionally, will larger storm events be allowed to impound and delay discharge, such as the 85-percentile storm?”

A: The Sanitation Districts are developing a dynamic sewer hydraulic flow model to assess system capacity under dry and wet weather conditions. Once completed and calibrated, this tool—used in conjunction with telemetry—may support expanded discharge options, including larger storm events such as the 85th percentile storm. Until that time, however, new requests for controlled discharge of stormwater outside of current Guidelines will generally not be evaluated or approved.