

# OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

MCES Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention

Issue # 21 / December 2005

## Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) is one of three divisions of the Metropolitan Council, a regional public agency working for the seven-county metropolitan area. The mission of MCES is to provide wastewater services that protect the public health and environment while supporting regional growth.

Services provided by MCES ensure that:

- (1) sufficient sewer capacity exists to serve planned development, and sufficient capital investments are made to preserve the region's water quality;
- (2) wastewater collection and treatment services are provided in a cost- and quality-competitive manner for 103 communities and more than 800 industrial clients; and
- (3) local plans provide for adequate water supply and nonpoint source pollution prevention in the region.

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Part of the Blue Lake staff was photographed in honor of receiving a U.S. EPA award

## Blue Lake Treatment Plant Receives Regional and National Recognition

The MCES Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant received the U.S. EPA Region 5 Operation and Maintenance Excellence Award in August for being the best large advanced plant in the six-state Great Lakes Region. The plant then went on to receive second place in the national U.S. EPA Clean Water Act Recognition Awards in October.

The plant earned these awards for its outstanding and consistent job of removing high levels of pollutants so the treated wastewater can be safely discharged into the Minnesota River. In addition to achieving excellent results in wastewater treatment, the plant has also:

- Initiated phosphorus removal by adjusting the treatment process even though removal will not be required until 2008.
- Reduced operating cost through the use of a new computerized maintenance management system and by working with the local electric utility to reduce power usage during peak demand.
- Partnered with New England Fertilizer Company (NEFCO) to process the plant's wastewater solids into a high-quality organic soil supplement for agricultural use.
- Promoted environmental technology education by teaming with St. Cloud Technical College and providing laboratory and classroom facilities for hands-on training in wastewater treatment operations.

"These awards are a credit to the plant staff who work so diligently and so consistently, not only to preserve the natural environment, but also to protect the public health," said Bill Moore, general manager of MCES.

## Important Dates:

January 15, 2006 - Liquid Waste Hauler reports due at MCES offices for all LWH permittees.

January 30, 2006 - All Regular and Special Discharge quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports due.

## MCES Mailing Address Change in 2006

The Metropolitan Council headquarters, which includes some MCES offices, is moving from Mears Park Centre to a building at 390 N. Robert St. in St. Paul. The move will occur in phases in March and April 2006. The Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention (IWPP) offices will remain at the Metro 94 complex, but all MCES mailings will need to be sent to the new Robert Street address when the move is complete. Letters will be sent to all permittees regarding the mailing address change as the date approaches. More information on the move will be provided in the next issue of Open Channel News.

## MCES Monitoring of Hauled Liquid Waste is Increasing

Liquid Waste Haulers will notice an increase in monitoring activity at MCES disposal sites. Since early this year, after the recommendations of the Systemwide Septage Management Study were adopted, IWPP staff have been modifying the procedure for monitoring hauled liquid waste. The new monitoring procedure involves an improved sampling method, more complete documentation of load information, and more frequent disposal site monitoring. The modifications are necessary to verify load content to ensure compliance and that appropriate revenue costs are captured.

Where suitable, a new sampling device will be used to collect a more representative sample of the load contents. The sampling device is installed between the truck's discharge valve and the discharge hose, and a series of samples are collected while the load is being discharged. In addition to increased sampling using this new method, the IWPP technicians are now recording more load information from the haulers on site. Specifically, the technicians will be asking for the address where the load was collected. Haulers should have the address readily available. The sample data and source information gathered will be reviewed for compliance and waste characteristics, and to verify proper reporting of load type. Cooperation with the new procedures is expected and appreciated.



## EPA Finalizes Streamlining of General Pretreatment Regulations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized and published the streamlining revisions of the General Pretreatment Regulations (40 CFR Part 403) in October. The General Pretreatment Regulations were established in 1978 to improve water quality under the Clean Water Act. The revisions to the rule are intended to reduce technical and administrative burdens that provide minimal environmental benefit but consume significant resources. The revisions do not reduce the environmental protections currently in place. Here is a summary of the more significant changes in the rule, which:

- Provides Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) with the authority to grant monitoring waivers to industrial facilities where they document that specific pollutants are not present at the facility or anywhere in the wastestream.
- Authorizes POTWs to use general permits to regulate multiple industrial dischargers that share common characteristics.
- Clarifies that POTWs can use Best Management Practices as an alternative to numeric limits that are developed to protect the POTW, water quality, and sewage sludge.
- Clarifies certain requirements regarding the frequency of on-site industrial facility inspections by POTW staff to evaluate the adequacy of controls for "slug discharges."
- Provides greater flexibility in the use of certain sampling techniques.
- Provides the Control Authority (POTW) with the discretion to authorize the use of equivalent concentration limits in lieu of mass limits for certain industrial categories.
- Authorizes POTWs to establish alternative sampling, reporting and inspection requirements for certain classes of Categorical Industrial Users.
- Clarifies or revises the definition of significant noncompliance (SNC) as it applies to violations of instantaneous and narrative requirements and submitting late reports, and provides additional options for publishing lists of industrial facilities in SNC.

While a few of the rule provisions require the POTW to make changes, many of them may be adopted at the discretion of the POTW. MCES is in the process of reviewing the streamlining rule and will notify permittees of any program changes that come about from this rule

## Permittee Reminders

Here are a few necessary reminders to Permittees regarding your MCES discharge permit, self-monitoring reports, and the Waste Discharge Rules.

**Permit Transfers** – Industrial Discharge Permits are issued to specific industrial users at specific locations. In the event of a change in facility ownership, the prior owner is required to notify MCES before the ownership transfer (not after), and MCES must grant written approval before a permit transfer can take place. Until MCES approval is granted, the prior owner is responsible for all requirements of the permit, including submittal of reports, compliance with specific conditions, and payment of all applicable fees and charges. Additionally, the new owner is considered to be operating without a permit and may be subject to a notice of violation. Ignorance of the MCES permit requirement to discharge industrial wastewater into public sewers is not an acceptable defense for operating without a permit.

**Self-Monitoring Reports (SMRs)** – It is the responsibility of the permittee when submitting SMR data to MCES to verify the accuracy of the data and determine compliance with their MCES discharge permit. The permittee should not just rely on a contract laboratory or consultant to determine compliance as they can be and have been wrong. When laboratory data are received after completing a self-monitoring project, the permittee should compare the analytical results to their permit limits. If a violation of the permit limits has occurred, the permittee is required to notify MCES within 24 hours of becoming aware of the violation. If there are questions regarding the SMR results and the permit limits, the permittee should call their assigned MCES engineer as soon as possible to determine compliance. Furthermore, the permittee is reminded that anytime a monitoring event occurs at a designated monitoring point, whether it is in-house monitoring or contracted out, **all data results must be reported**. Failure to report these data could result in a notice of violation, with the possibility of further enforcement action.

**Access to Premises and Records** – MCES staff have the authority to enter, without prior notice, the premises of any industrial user to determine compliance with the Waste Discharge Rules and any permit issued under these rules. Upon entering, MCES staff have the right to inspect the facility and its pretreatment systems, review waste disposal records, and install monitoring devices. Industry personnel shall not intentionally interfere with or delay access to the facility or the monitoring point. If the established industry representative is unavailable, another representative shall provide access.

MCES is appreciative of the vast majority of permittees who cooperatively work with MCES staff and abide by their permit and the Waste Discharge Rules.



**Composting is a way to recycle food waste back into the soil.**

## MCES Encourages Food Composting

MCES permits more than 800 Industrial Users. Many of our permitted industries have food preparation facilities, such as cafeterias, on site. This is especially true for hospitals on permit, which provide food services for patients, staff, and visitors. Currently many of these hospitals use food grinders to grind up food waste and deposit it into the sanitary sewer. Others use food pulpers, which separate the solid portion of the food and deposit only the liquid portion into the sewer. Both methods for food disposal contribute a heavy organic load to the waste stream. Treating the organic load from food grinders and pulpers at MCES wastewater treatment plants is costly, and keeping the grinders and pulpers working properly can take significant effort. Furthermore, it is important to note the practice of grinding bulk food waste, to avoid the need for off-site disposal as solid waste, is prohibited by the MCES Waste Discharge Rules.

Composting is one alternative to using grinders and pulpers for handling food wastes that can help avoid high costs for equipment maintenance and wastewater treatment. Compost is defined as a mixture of decomposing plant material and other organic waste that is used as a fertilizer and soil conditioner. In essence, composting is a recycling of food back to the earth from where it originated.

There is a demand for natural organic soil amendments in the Twin Cities area. It is needed for gardens, ball fields, construction projects, golf courses, etc. Many local companies are in need of organic food wastes for the manufacturing of these soil amendments.

MCES encourages all hospitals and other sources to actively explore composting as an alternative to food grinding and pulping. Minnesota Waste Wise, [www.mnwastewise.org](http://www.mnwastewise.org), (651) 292-4662; Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, [www.moea.state.mn.us](http://www.moea.state.mn.us), (651) 215-0284; and Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board, [www.swmcb.org](http://www.swmcb.org), can assist hospitals and other industries in finding alternative, environmentally friendly ways to handle food wastes.

## Open Channel News

is published by  
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## 2006 Rates and Fees

The rates and fees affecting industrial users for 2006 are as follows:

Strength Charge Rates for wastewater generated within the Council's region will be \$0.136 per excess pound of total suspended solids (TSS), and \$0.068 per excess pound of chemical oxygen demand (COD).

Full cost recovery rates for treatment of industrial wastewater hauled to approved MCES disposal sites will be \$0.267 per excess pound of TSS and \$0.1335 per excess pound of COD. There is an additional \$50 per load service fee for out of region loads.

Liquid waste haulers' standard load charges will be \$33.81 per 1,000 gallons. Holding tank wastes will be charged \$1.52 per 1,000 gallons. The Portable Toilet Waste rate will be \$44.94 per 1,000 gallons. Collar county domestic waste load charges will be \$43.81 per 1,000 gallons.

Service Availability Charge will be \$1,550 per unit, and the associated Add-on-Service Charge rates will be \$0.78 per 1,000 gallons.

For all permittees, permit fees will range from \$450 to \$4,250 depending on permit status.

For more information regarding rates and fees, please contact your MCES engineer or visit: [www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialWaste/news\\_rates.htm](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialWaste/news_rates.htm) The 2006 rates will be posted on this site following end-of-year billing in February 2006.