
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

SUMMARY OF SPILL AND STORM RELATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

for

Wastewater Treatment Facilities¹ and Sanitary Sewer Collection Systems

Summary

1. Immediately report sewage spills and wastewater containment failures to Cal OES (Refer to Section 1: [All Sewage Spill and Containment Failure Requirements](#)).
2. If your wastewater treatment facility is out of permit compliance due to flooding or a spill at the facility, submit a written report as described in your wastewater permit (Refer to Section 2: [Wastewater Treatment Plant Noncompliance or Spill](#) Reporting).
3. If your collection system is impacted by flooding or has a spill, comply with Water Quality Order DWQ 2022-0103-DWQ Sanitary Sewer Systems General Order and report spills to CIWQS. (Refer to Section 3: **Collection System Spills**).

Additional Information

1. All Sewage Spill and Containment Failure Requirements for Cal OES and Central Coast Water Board

State law requires that an unauthorized discharge exceeding 1,000 gallons of sewage [as defined in 23 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 2250 (b)] must be **reported to Cal OES immediately. This includes spills from the collection system or from the wastewater treatment plant.** Threatened spills, such as threatened sewage containment failures, must also be reported to Cal OES immediately.

- Call California [Office of Emergency Services \(Cal OES\)](#) at **(800) 852-7550**. For more information, see the attached fact sheet: [CalOES Reporting Sewage Release Fact Sheet](#).

¹ This document only covers a summary of spill and storm related reporting requirements for Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) facilities and collection systems.

For a sewage spill exceeding 1,000 gallons, you must also immediately contact Central Coast Water Board staff at **(805) 549-3891** or by email at rb3wdr@waterboards.ca.gov and wb-orpp-emp-wastewater@waterboards.ca.gov.

After the immediate notification, you **must also follow up** with a report in writing to the Central Coast Water Board. Please follow the respective instructions below.

2. Wastewater Treatment Plant Noncompliance or Spill Reporting

Sections A and B below include a summary of noncompliance reporting requirements based on the permit you are enrolled in. Section C lists the information required in the report.

A. Permit Requirements for General Permit 2014-0153-DWQ² (Small Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems with Flow Less Than 100,000 Gallons Per Day)

Your permit requires you to submit a notification to the Central Coast Water Board if you do not comply, or will be unable to comply, with effluent quality, pond freeboard, flow rate, or title 22 engineering report requirements or if you have bypass or overflow issues or a containment failure. Notification must occur as soon as you have knowledge of the noncompliance or potential for noncompliance, and you must confirm this notification in writing **within ten days**.³ The written notification shall state the date, time, nature, cause of noncompliance, immediate response action, and a schedule for corrective actions.

B. Permit Requirements for General Permit R3-2020-00204 (Domestic Wastewater Systems with Flow Greater Than 100,000 Gallons Per Day) and Individual Permits

Your permit requires compliance with Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements for Waste Discharge Requirements (Standard Provisions),⁵ which requires you to submit a report to the Central Coast Water Board **within five days** of awareness of **any permit noncompliance that may endanger health or the environment**.

² State Water Resources Control Board Order WQ 2014-0153-DWQ, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Small Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2020/r32020_0020.pdf

³ General Permit 2014-0153-DWQ requirement, section 3, item A and B.

⁴ Central Coast Water Board Order RB3-2020-0020, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Domestic Wastewater Systems with Flows Greater than 100,000 gallons per day. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/adopted_orders/2020/r32020_0020.pdf

⁵ The December 5, 2013 Standard Provisions can be found at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_decisions/docs/wdr_standard_provisions_2013.pdf

Examples of noncompliance events that may endanger health or the environment include a violation of your discharge prohibitions, upsets, overflows, spills, or bypass resulting from storms, floods, operational failures, etc.⁶

C. Written Notification Requirements

Please include the following details, if applicable, in your written notification:

1. Description of the noncompliance and its cause.

- Specific location upset, overflow, or bypass occurred at the facility.
- Estimated total volume of upset, overflow, or bypass.
- If noncompliance is ongoing, work with Central Coast Water Board staff contact to determine reporting moving forward.
- Photos of upset, overflow, or bypass during and/or after flooding.
- Describe, if any, components of the facility that were not functioning.
- Describe, if any, components of the facility that failed or were not functioning to cause the upset, overflow, or bypass.
- Describe, if any, components (physical and mechanical) of the facility that are still in failure mode or continue to not function.
- Summarize the affected surface waterbody, influent flow rates, available storage capacity, and pond freeboard levels, if applicable, at the time of the noncompliance.
- Note if the facility lost power and if backup generators were used to restore power.

2. Period of noncompliance (including date and time) or anticipated duration

- Include date and time noncompliance occurred. Note if any noncompliance is ongoing and when you anticipate the facility will return back into a state of compliance.

3. Steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate, and prevent recurrence of the noncompliance.

- Describe the short-term emergency measures that were or will be taking place to ensure the upset, overflow, or bypass does not recur or continue to occur (if ongoing).
- Describe the long-term emergency measures that will be adopted to ensure an upset, overflow, or bypass does not recur due to a similar

⁶ Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements, Section C, General Reporting Requirements, Item 3

event, failure, or malfunction. If you need additional time to develop more details for the long-term plan, then describe next steps and a schedule for when this will be completed.

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- 4. Written notifications must be signed⁷ by one of the following:**
 - For a private residence: by the property owner of the residence.
 - For a corporation: by a principal executive officer of at least the level of vice president.
 - For a partnership or sole proprietorship: by a general partner or the proprietor, respectively.
 - For a municipality, state, federal, or other public agency: by either a principal executive officer or ranking elected or appointed official.
 - A duly authorized representative of a person described above if all of the following are completed:
 - The authorization is made in writing by a person described above.
 - The authorization specifies either an individual or a position having responsibility for the overall operation of the regulated facility or activity, such as the position of plant manager, operator of a waste management unit, superintendent, or position of equivalent responsibility. (A duly authorized representative may thus be either a named individual or any individual occupying a named position.)
 - The [written authorization](#) is submitted to (or already on file with) the Central Coast Water Board.

Any person signing a report makes the following certification, whether it is expressed or implied:

I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to ensure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties of submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Signed reports should be submitted in PDF format via e-mail to: rb3wdr@waterboards.ca.gov and uploaded to GeoTracker.

Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan

⁷ General Permit Order 2014-0153, Section 3, Item C: General Reporting Requirements and Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements, Section C – General Reporting Requirements, Item 14 and 15

A reminder that all wastewater treatment facilities are also required to have a Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan that describes operation and maintenance activities to prevent accidental releases of wastewater and to effectively respond to such releases, minimizing the environmental impact.⁸ Please contact Central Coast Water Board staff if you have any questions or would like an example report.

3. Collection System Spills

Spills from a collection system require immediate notification to Cal OES (as described above) and require CIWQS reporting. Please visit the Sanitary Sewer Systems General Order webpage for the specific requirements and additional information.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ssso/

Staff Contacts:

For more information, please contact Central Coast Water Board staff:

Monterey County: Kristina Olmos, kristina.olmos@waterboards.ca.gov

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Santa Barbara County and Ventura County: Cecile Blancarte,

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Santa Cruz County, San Benito County, and Santa Clara County: Danial

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San Luis Obispo County: Rachel Hohn, rachel.hohn@waterboards.ca.gov

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⁸ See 2014-0153 permit, section E, Item 1: Technical Report Preparation Requirements or RB3-2020-0020 permit, section VI, Item 2: Technical Report Requirements