



**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)¹ for Clean Water Program
Water Quality Management Permits for Small Flow Treatment Facilities (WQG-01)
SOP No. BCW-PMT-022
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¹ **DISCLAIMER:** The process and procedures outlined in this SOP are intended to supplement existing requirements. Nothing in the SOP shall affect regulatory requirements. The process, procedures and interpretations herein are not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on the part of DEP to give the rules in this SOP that weight or deference. This document establishes the framework within which DEP will exercise its administrative discretion in the future. DEP reserves the discretion to deviate from this policy statement if circumstances warrant. All hyperlinks in this SOP are intended for DEP use only.



Version History

Date	Version	Description	Author
7/7/2026	2.2	Updated to clarify the applicability of permit fees for specific government and quasi-government agencies/corporations.	William Gaspari
5/9/2026	2.1	Updated to clarify the "Application Received Date" and related submission dates.	William Gaspari
6/30/2024	2.0	Updated to reflect Payback	Kevin McLeary
3/12/2013	1.3	Added a reference to the Program Clarification Memo on Permit Coordination in the introduction and removed the requirement for Section Chiefs to verify coordination requirements in Section II before the completeness review. Removed requirement for coordination of the WQM permit with Chapter 102/105 permits.	Sean Furjanic
1/2/2013	1.2	Modified the step for preparing the PA Bulletin Notice for receipt of the application from Section I.F (administrative process) to Section III.C (completed through NMSWMS once application is deemed complete).	Sean Furjanic
12/28/2012	1.1	Removed the GIF from Section III A (at this time, a GIF is not required for a WQG-01 NOI). Clarified in Section I A.2 that if a fee is missing, it should be treated as an underpayment in accordance with the Management Directive.	Sean Furjanic
11/9/2012	1.0	Original	Sean Furjanic



OBJECTIVE	This SOP describes the procedures by which the Clean Water Program will process WQG-01 permit applications for new or modified small flow treatment facilities that conform to the Small Flow Treatment Facility Manual (385-2188-005) ("Small Flow Manual"). Conformance to the Small Flow Manual is generally a pre-requisite for WQG-01 permit coverage although DEP may authorize certain deviations upon technical review of the application (see Section IV). In addition, the manual allows certain proprietary technologies to be used, provided that the technology has been reviewed by DEP and has shown that it capable of meeting the effluent limits, based on the average effluent concentration plus one standard deviation. The authorization type covered by this SOP is "WQG01" (Water Quality Mgmt General, SFTF).
SCOPE	New small flow treatment facilities that will be using land application as the complete effluent disposal option should use the authorization type "WQ2LA" (Water Quality Mgmt Part II, Sewerage Trmt Plant Land Application). The design of the small flow treatment facility should be evaluated in accordance with this SOP, and the design of the land application system will be evaluated in accordance with the SOP for "Water Quality Management Permits for Land Application of Sewage and Industrial Wastewaters." Under the Governor's Executive Order 2023-07 (Building Efficiency in the Commonwealth's Permitting, Licensing, and Certification Processes), DEP has 66 business days to take a final action on a new or amended SFTF NOI. Failure to take action within this period of time may result in a refund in the NOI fee ("Payback").
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	The SOP is organized sequentially by activities that will be completed. The functional roles that are responsible for the activity are identified with the name of the activity as follows: • Preliminary Data Management and Fee Processing (Administrative Staff) • Prioritization and Assignment (Section Chief) • Completeness Review (Application Manager) • Technical Review and Preparation of Permit (Application Manager) • Final Review (Section Chief) • Final Decision (Program Manager) • Final Permit Processing (Administrative Staff or Application Manager) Administrative Staff – Administrative staff based on regional staffing and policy. Administrative staff are responsible for receiving and date stamping hard copies of applications, scanning them into the computer and emailing them to the appropriate Application Manager. They are responsible for fee processing. They are responsible for creating an electronic file folder and entering the module into eFACTS if the Application Manager does not.



	Application Manager – Responsible for ensuring fees are in accordance with the fee structure established in the NOI. Responsible for completeness and technical reviews of the module, coordinating the review with other staff, such as the Hydrogeologist. Prioritization of application received is expected with the assistance of the Section Chief. Responsible for communicating with the applicant and for preparing Deficiency, Approval and Denial Letters. They are responsible for ensuring the application meets all review timelines. Responsible for briefing management during an Elevated Review. Responsible for distributing final letters to all parties, closing out eFACTS and populating the electronic file folder with the module and all supplemental information. Section Chief – Responsible for reviewing and revising the application Deficiency, Approval and Denial letters prior to signing the letters. Responsible for being part of the Elevated Review Process. Responsible for ensuring the application meets all review timelines. Program Manager – Responsible for being part of the Elevated Review Process. Responsible for ensuring the application meets all review timelines. Regional Director or Bureau Director - Responsible for being part of the Elevated Review Process, if applicable.
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT	• Computer • Access to eFACTS • Access to eMapPA • Photocopier/Scanner • Access to Title 25 Pa. Code • The Clean Streams Law



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Details / Procedures / Steps.....	6
I. Preliminary Data Management and Fee Processing (Administrative Staff)	6
II. Prioritization and Assignment (Section Chief)	8
III. Completeness Review (Application Manager)	8
IV. Technical Review and Preparation of Draft Permit (Application Manager)	10
V. Final Review (Section Chief)	11
VI. Final Decision (Program Manager).....	12
VII. Final Permit Processing (Administrative Staff or Application Manager)	12
References	13
Appendices	13



INTRODUCTION

This SOP describes the procedures by which the Clean Water Program will process WQG-01 permit applications for new or modified small flow treatment facilities that conform to the [Small Flow Treatment Facility Manual](#) (385-2188-005) ("Small Flow Manual"). Conformance to the Small Flow Manual is generally a pre-requisite for WQG-01 permit coverage although DEP may authorize certain deviations upon technical review of the application (see Section IV). In addition, the manual allows certain proprietary technologies to be used, provided that the technology has been reviewed by DEP and has shown that it is capable of meeting the effluent limits, based on the average effluent concentration plus one standard deviation. The authorization type covered by this SOP is "WQG01" (Water Quality Mgmt General, SFTF).

DETAILS / PROCEDURES / STEPS

I. Preliminary Data Management and Fee Processing (Administrative Staff)

When applications are received, administrative staff will:

A. Create the authorization record in [eFACTS](#).

1. Select the proper auth type code and verify that the correct fee was submitted: .

Single Residence Treatment Facilities:

- \$200 for new facilities
- \$100 for amendments

Other Small Flow Treatment Facilities

- \$1,000 for new facilities
- \$200 for amendments

- a. If no fee is included in the application (e.g., the applicant selects the wrong categories and ends up with PUP not requiring a fee), then the application shall not be entered into eFacts until the fee is received. The day the fee is received shall be used as the application received date, as based on submission type (see Section I.A.6.). An application with no fee shall be considered incomplete and notification shall be sent to the applicant informing them that the fee will need to be submitted.
- b. If an incorrect fee is included in the application, then the application shall be entered into eFacts using the appropriate received date, as based on submission type (see Section I.A.6.). An application with an incorrect fee shall be considered incomplete and notification shall be sent to the applicant informing them of the incorrect fee.

A subtask of "SDN" (Send Deficiency Notice/Receive Response) shall be entered into eFacts with the corresponding date the incompleteness notification is sent to the applicant. A technical review of the application will not proceed until the correct fee is received.

The check should not more than 10 days old unless otherwise authorized by [Management Directive OAM-1000-01](#), and the check should be payable to *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*.

NOTE – Only the following applicants are exempt from permit application fees:

- the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection,
- the United States Environmental Protection Agency,
- the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission,



- the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,
- the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation,
- the National Railroad Passenger Corporation d/b/a Amtrak,
- the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and
- Port Authorities that operate in the Commonwealth.

Any other applicant requesting a fee exemption must be referred to the Bureau of Regulatory Counsel for review.

2. Prepare the physical check payment for transmission to the regional business office following [Management Directive OAM-1000-01](#), and enter the fee payment against the authorization in [eFACTS](#), unless the client is fee exempt. A copy of the check will be made and placed in the application file. Where the fee has not been submitted, treat it as an underpayment in accordance with the Management Directive.
3. Select the proper application type, using the appropriate regional organization code.
4. Associate the proper client and site to the project/authorization. If necessary, create the client, site, client/site relationship, at least one subfacility (SF) and the PF.
5. Enter the date the application was received ("Recvd") and the date administrative staff creates the authorization ("Admin") into [eFACTS](#)' Application Screen. The application date received shall be based on the type of submission, as follows:
 - a. Electronic Submissions via Public Upload with Payment (PUP): The date indicated by the system-generated timestamp upon successful submission.
 - b. Physical Submissions: The date the submission is physically delivered to a DEP office as established by a verifiable system timestamp or documented physical receipt.
6. Enter a project description in the Project screen (tab) in [eFACTS](#). The description will be short but of sufficient detail to characterize the scope of the project and written as staff wish it to appear in the PA Bulletin.
7. If required by [eFACTS](#) to create the authorization, select the lead reviewer as the Section Chief. If the Section Chief identifies the application manager at this step, the assigned application manager may be selected for the lead reviewer.
8. Select the Master Auth or set the current authorization to be the Master Auth, as appropriate.

NOTE – New WQM permit applications should always be Master Auths in [eFACTS](#). Applications for amendments may use the original WQM permit as the Master Auth.
9. Create a subtask of "COMPL" (B/E Completeness Review) under the Completeness Review task in [eFACTS](#), and enter a start date that corresponds to the date the application was received.

B. Enter consultant information.

If a consultant is identified on the application, select the appropriate client or otherwise create the consultant as a client on the Application Screen.

C. Enter or otherwise review and update PF and SF Details.



For non-land application scenarios, the applicable PF for a WQM permit is the same PF that is associated to the NPDES permit – do not change the PF Other ID. If the treatment plant is new and will use land application instead of a stream discharge, a new PF will need to be created. For new PFs and amendments to existing PFs associated with land application, use the WQM permit number as the PF Other ID.

1. Enter or update PF Mailing Address (client address) and Location Address (site address) in accordance with the application.
2. Update the PF Kind to “Sewage Publicly Owned (Muni)” or “Sewage Non-Publicly Owned (Non-Muni),” as necessary.
3. Ensure the Client ID and Other ID of the PF are identical to those for the authorization, otherwise update the PF.
4. Create a Treatment Plant (TP) subfacility (SF) for new treatment plants, as applicable, and set the SF Status to Active. Enter SF Latitude and Longitude coordinates in [eFACTS](#) corresponding to the mid-point of the site. Enter a description of the treatment plant in the comments field.

NOTE – if there is an existing treatment plant that will be upgraded (e.g., new tanks, disinfection, etc.), and an existing TP in [eFACTS](#), DO NOT create a new TP SF, but instead update the existing TP SF’s details and provide information on the upgrade in the comments field.

- D. Push Master Auth to WMS (if not done so previously), unless the current auth is the Master.

If the current auth is not the Master Auth (i.e., amendments only), ensure the Master Auth linked to the current auth has been pushed to WMS already (otherwise, push the Master Auth to WMS).

- E. Mail a complete copy of the application to Erie County Health Department (ECHD), Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), or Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) if applicable, unless administrative staff is aware that the applicant mailed a copy directly to those agencies.

II. Prioritization and Assignment (Section Chief)

Once Step I has been completed by administrative staff, the application will be given to the Section Chief. The Section Chief will:

- A. Prioritize the application in accordance with the “[Permit Review Hierarchy](#)” contained in DEP’s Policy (400-2100-001). The Section Chief will note on the application file or a permit tracking sheet the hierarchy number as contained in the Policy.
- B. Assign an application manager (i.e., “lead reviewer”) to the application unless this has been done previously. The Section Chief will enter the name of the application manager into [eFACTS](#) for the authorization unless administrative staff has already completed this step.
- C. Optionally, route a copy of the application or a permit tracking sheet to Operations staff for a determination of non-compliance issues that may affect permit issuance.



III. Completeness Review (Application Manager)

Application managers will attempt to finish Completeness Reviews within 10 business days of DEP's receipt of an application.

When the application manager receives the application from the Section Chief, the application manager will:

A. Review the application for administrative completeness and overall technical adequacy. A complete and technically adequate application includes the following, not including the fee that is addressed in Step I:

1. Two copies of the Notice of Intent (NOI) form, with one notarized original.
2. Two copies of design plans with Engineer's seal and signature on cover and Engineer's seal on each plan sheet.
3. Two copies of technical specifications with Engineer's seal and signature on cover.
4. Two copies of the Design Engineer's Report with Engineer's seal and signature on cover.
5. Two copies of a topographic map identifying the project site.
6. Two copies of a general layout diagram (unless design plans provide this information).
7. Two copies of a diagram providing sizes, capacities and dimensions (unless design plans provide this information).
8. One copy of the Act 537 approval letter (if approval is required). The design must be in accordance with the Act 537 approval.
9. Soils are not suitable for an on-lot system, but the discharge will not be to a dry stream channel in areas of hazardous geology or in areas with elevated nitrate-nitrogen concentrations.

NOTE – In general, if the applicant submits an older NOI form that is not the most recent, the application manager may deem any information that is missing an insignificant or significant deficiency, at the application manager's discretion. If the NOI is not denied as a result, the application manager will notify the consultant or applicant that a more recent version of the NOI is available for future use.

B. Complete the following data management tasks in [eFACTS](#):

1. Review and update PF and SF details as necessary. Record as much information as possible into the PF and SF details screens.
2. Link all applicable SFs to the authorization record.
3. Push the authorization from [eFACTS](#) to WMS. If the authorization cannot be pushed to WMS and if the problem(s) cannot be resolved by the application manager, the application manager will first work with administrative staff to resolve the problem(s) and then contact the Central Office Division of Operations, Monitoring and Data Systems if administrative staff cannot resolve them.



- C. If none of the criteria in A.1 – 9 are found to be deficient, the application manager will proceed to Step III F. No “completeness letter” will be issued.

The application manager will prepare the PA Bulletin notice for receipt of the application in WMS.

- D. If the application is incomplete and the deficiencies are determined to be insignificant (i.e., an item that in the application manager’s judgment can be corrected within one business day), the application manager will contact the applicant (or applicant’s authorized representative) by phone to explain the deficiency and offer the opportunity to submit the necessary materials informally before the Completeness Review deadline expires to make the application complete. The application manager may or may not (at the application manager’s discretion) follow up the phone call with an email to the applicant or their authorized representative.

NOTE – in general, application managers will attempt to communicate by phone with the applicant (client or site contact) first, and if these attempts fail, the application manager may communicate with the consultant.

A phone log will be kept by each application manager that details the name of the person contacted, the day and time of the conversation, and notes for all communications regarding the completeness and technical reviews. All phone logs will be retained with the application file during and following permit issuance, or otherwise a database or spreadsheet will be used and made accessible to allow others to check latest correspondence for a case if the application manager is out of the office.

In the event the application manager is unable to contact the applicant, authorized representative or consultant by phone within 5 business days to communicate the insignificant deficiency, the application manager will prepare and issue a denial letter as noted in Step III E.

After the necessary materials have been received (receipt by email or fax is acceptable except when original signatures, plans or seals are needed), and assuming the application can then be considered complete, the application manager will then proceed to Step III F. If the submission does not correct the original insignificant deficiencies, the application manager will prepare and issue a denial letter as noted in Step III E, below.

- E. If the applicant fails to submit the requested information by the deadline for the Completeness Review Task following a phone call (or attempt to contact the applicant by phone), or if the deficiencies are determined to be significant, the application manager will prepare a letter that denies the application, for the Program Manager’s signature. The template in WMS found at *Letters – Application Denial Letter* will be used. The [eFACTS](#) authorization record will be closed out by using the disposition code “Denied.” A subtask of “DENC” (Application Incomplete – Denied) will be entered into [eFACTS](#) against the Completeness Review Task, with start and end dates corresponding to the date of the letter. The application fee will not be returned.

- F. Enter an end date for the “COMPL” subtask, when the application is deemed complete.

IV. Technical Review and Preparation of Permit (Application Manager)

Following completion of the Completeness Review, the application manager will verify that the application and supplementary materials meet DEP design standards, or otherwise deviate from such standards with appropriate justification, and prepare the permit documents. Applications will be reviewed in order of priority; in the event of a conflict, the matter will be resolved by the Section Chief.

- A. Enter a “DR” (Decision Review) subtask in [eFACTS](#) under the Technical Review task, with a start date corresponding to the date following the determination that the NOI is complete.



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- B. For new small flow treatment facilities and upgrades thereto, the application manager will consider the applicable design standards as contained in the Small Flow Manual. Those standards are DEP's preferred and recommended means for meeting the regulatory requirements.
- C. If necessary, transmit a technical deficiency letter.
1. In the event, upon a detailed technical review of the application, the application manager determines that the criteria in paragraph B are not adequately demonstrated in the application and supplementary materials, or if the application does not otherwise demonstrate that regulatory requirements are satisfied, the application manager will:
 - a. Discuss the deficiency with the Section Chief, if the application manager is not a licensed Engineer. The Section Chief will determine whether the issue should be considered an insignificant deficiency, a significant deficiency, or a non-deficiency.
 - b. Make a determination if the issue is an insignificant or significant deficiency, if the application manager is a licensed Engineer.
 2. If the deficiencies are determined to be insignificant, the application manager will contact the applicant and/or the project consultant by phone and request a response by the close of the next business day or an alternate deadline at the application manager's discretion. A phone log will be maintained by the application manager to record the results of all such conversations. A follow-up email may be transmitted at the application manager's discretion.
 3. If a) the insignificant deficiencies are not corrected by the deadline requested, b) multiple phone calls to the applicant and consultant fail to establish communication, or c) the application manager or Section Chief determines that the deficiencies are significant, the application manager will prepare a Technical Deficiency (TD) Letter using the WMS template at *Letters – Technical Deficiency Letter*. The number of TD Letters will be limited to one in most circumstances. The letter will request a response within 15 business days or a longer period of time at the application manager's discretion (as long as it does not exceed the processing deadline in [eFACTS](#)). The application manager will enter a subtask of "SDN" (Send Deficiency Notice/Receive Response) into [eFACTS](#) with a start date corresponding to the date of the letter.
 4. If the applicant responds to the TD letter within 15 business days or the alternative schedule, the application manager will enter an end date for the "SDN" subtask in [eFACTS](#) corresponding to the date the submission was received, review the submission and, assuming it addresses the concerns raised in the TD letter, proceed with Step IV GG. If the submission does not address the concerns in the TD letter, return to Step IV FF.1.
 5. If the applicant fails to respond to the TD letter within 15 business days or the alternative schedule, or if the response fails to address the issues raised in the TD letter, the application manager will enter a subtask of "ELEV" (Elevated Review Process) and brief the Section Chief on the circumstances.
 6. If following the Elevated Review Process the decision is to deny the application, the application manager will enter a "DENT" subtask (App Technically Deficient – Denied) into [eFACTS](#), enter start and end dates for the "DENT" subtask corresponding to the date of the decision, enter end dates for the "SDN" and "ELEV" subtasks, prepare a letter that denies the application using the WMS template at *Letters – Application Denial Letter*, and close the authorization in [eFACTS](#) using the disposition code "Denied."



D. Prepare the Internal Review and Recommendations (IRR).

1. Application managers will provide a brief summary of the application and the review using the WMS template at *WQM Permits – Internal Review and Recommendations*. When complete, the document will be set to a status of Final and a disposition of Complete.
2. During preparation of the IRR, application managers will run the WMS Query at *Violations – eFACTS – Open Violations for Client by Permit No.* to determine whether there are any unresolved violations associated with the client that will affect issuance of the permit (per CSL Section 609). If there are unresolved violation(s), they will be documented in the IRR.

E. Prepare the final permit documents.

1. Application managers will generate and save the templates found at *WQM Permits – WQG-01 General Permit* for the permit document and *WQM Permits – Post-Construction Certification Form* for the post-construction certification form. Following generation of the document, application managers will manually enter all information on the first page of the permit document that are not automatically populated.
2. Application managers will generate and save the template found at *Letters – WQM Permit Cover Letter* to serve as the cover letter for the final permit. The application manager will review the letter carefully to ensure that correct and appropriate facility names, abbreviations, salutations, and other information from [eFACTS](#) are used and make edits as needed.
3. These documents will be set to a status of Final and disposition of Pending, printed, assembled and provided to the Section Chief.

V. Final Review (Section Chief)

The Section Chief will complete the following tasks upon receipt of the final permit package:

- A. Verify that coordination has been completed, if determined to be necessary.
- B. Review the IRR and final permit documents and sign the IRR if the Section Chief is in agreement with the content or otherwise return the package to the application manager for edits.
- C. Verify that the minimum required documents from Step IV are in WMS as Final – Pending documents.
- D. Submit the final permit package to the Program Manager.

VI. Final Decision (Program Manager)

The Program Manager will complete the following tasks upon receipt of the final permit package:

- A. Review the IRR and final permit documents.
- B. Sign the final permit cover letter, the first page of the permit document and the IRR if the Program Manager is in agreement with the content or otherwise return the package to the Section Chief for edits.



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- C. Submit the final, signed permit package to administrative staff or the application manager (at region's discretion).

VII. Final Permit Processing (Administrative Staff or Application Manager)

Administrative staff or the application manager will complete the following tasks upon receipt of the final, signed permit package:

- A. Open the permit document in WMS, enter the issuance date on the permit and apply a signature indicator ("/s/") on the permit.
- B. Change the Disposition of the final permit cover letter, final permit and all other documents that will be part of the final permit package issued to the applicant from "Pending" to "Issued (Mailed)." Change the Disposition of documents that are not part of the final permit package from "Pending" to "Complete." Ensure there are no documents in the list with a Disposition of "Pending".
- C. Enter an end date for the "DR" subtask in [eFACTS](#) corresponding to the issuance date.
- D. Issue the authorization in [eFACTS](#).
- E. Make copies, and mail the copies to the applicant, consultant, ECHD, ACHD and DRBC, as applicable, with a copy to other appropriate staff. The final permit cover letter will be sent via Certified Mail to the applicant only.
- F. Generate and save the PA Bulletin listing for the final permit issuance using the appropriate template in WMS or the standard PA Bulletin template (*this is subject to change*).
- G. Transmit the case files to the regional file room.



REFERENCES

[Small Flow Treatment Facilities Manual](#)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Acronyms

Acronym	Name
ACHD	Allegheny County Health Department
BUS7	Land application of exceptional quality biosolids general permit
BUS7O	Land application of exceptional quality biosolids, out-of-state general permit
BUS8	Land application of quality biosolids general permit
BUS8O	Land application of quality biosolids, out-of-state general permit
BUS9	Land application of residential septage general permit
BUS9O	Land application of residential septage, out-of-state general permit
COMPL	Completeness review
CV	Conveyance subfacility
DENC	Application incomplete – denied
DENT	Application technically deficient – denied
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DP	Draft permit
DR	Decision review
DRBC	Delaware River Basin Commission
ECHD	Erie County Health Department
eFACTS	Environmental Facility Application Compliance Tracking System
ELEV	Elevated review process
IRSIS	Individual Residential Spray Irrigation System
LR	Lead Reviewer
NCRO	Northcentral Regional Office
NERO	Northeast Regional Office
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWRO	Northwest Regional Office



O&M	Operation and maintenance
OSBP	Out-of-state biosolids processor
PABGO	Biosolids out-of-state individual generator permit
PABIG	Biosolids individual generator permit
PABIS	Biosolids individual site permit
PAG	Pennsylvania General Permit
PC	Private composter
PF	Primary facility
PH	Public hearing
PS	Pump station subfacility
SCRO	Southcentral Regional Office
SDN	Send deficiency notice
SERO	Southeast Regional Office
SEO	Sewage Enforcement Officer
SF	Subfacility
SN	Sewage Non-Publicly owned
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSN	Site suitability notice
SWRO	Southwest Regional Office
TD	Technical deficiency
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WMS	Water management system
W2CAF	Water Quality Management Part II Manure storage facility
W2IW	Water Quality Management Part II Industrial Waste Treatment Plant
WQ2LA	Water Quality Management Part II Sewerage Treatment Plant Land Application
WQ2PS	Water Quality Management Part II sewer extensions and pump stations
WQ2TP	Water Quality Management Part II sewage treatment facility
WQG01	Water Quality Management general permit for small flow treatment facilities
WQG02	Water Quality Management general permit for sewer extensions and pump stations
WQJ91	Water Quality Management Part II Pesticides permit