# *Permits for Discharges of Stormwater and Hydrostatic Test Water*

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issues general discharge permits for discharges of storm water and hydrostatic test water from petroleum terminals to surface or groundwaters of the State. (Until recently, MDE fulfilled this permitting obligation by issuing individual permits.) Copies of entire general permits can be obtained by contacting the Oil Control Program at MDE.

**What is a General Permit?**

General discharge permits are permits issued for certain classes of similar discharges. General permits improve the efficiency of MDE in issuing permits while also reducing the usual waiting time to obtain a permit. Discharges that are the result of a particular operation or treatment process, having very similar effluent characteristics usually are the types of discharges that are permitted under a general permit. A general permit enumerates the limitations and conditions that the discharges must meet and is subject to the same enforcement actions as individual discharge permits.

**Why is a General Discharge Permit important?**

This general discharge permit was developed to address *discharges of stormwater from storage tank diked and loading rack areas and hydrostatic test water from petroleum terminals*. Both federal (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 122) and State (Code of Maryland Regulations 26.08.04) regulations require discharge permits for this activity. Specifically, state regulations require discharges of any waste or wastewater to surface or ground waters, regardless of volume, be authorized by a discharge permit. Federal regulations only address discharges to surface waters and require a permit for the pollutant discharges.

Regulating discharged effluents avoids potential localized problems in receiving waters. These regulations require quality control of all wastewater by the best available treatment or pollution prevention technology, regardless of impact.

**How is compliance verified?**

The general permit sets numerical limits on the concentration of the petroleum product contamination following treatment of the storm water or hydrostatic test water. The limits are based on what has been demonstrated to be technologically achievable. Self-monitoring is required to verify compliance. The permit requires testing to verify that discharges with a specified volume and duration be tested to verify that the effluent is not toxic to aquatic life, and if toxicity is present, the permit requires its elimination. This is a requirement of the federal Clean Water Act. This permit also sets operational requirements, such as inspection routines.

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