



Frequently Asked Questions on National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Electronic Reporting Rule

What is NPDES reporting?

The Clean Water Act requires that municipal, industrial, or commercial facilities that discharge wastewater directly into waters of the United States obtain a permit under the NPDES program. The NPDES program requires that permitted facilities and certain other regulated entities monitor and report data on pollutant discharges and take other actions to ensure discharges do not affect human health or the environment. Currently, some regulated entities subject to NPDES reporting requirements submit data in paper form to states and other regulatory authorities, where the information must be manually entered into data systems.

What is changing with NPDES reporting?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule. The rule requires regulated entities to report information electronically, instead of filing written paper reports. The rule does not change what information is required. It only changes the method by which information is provided (i.e., electronic rather than paper-based). The rule also requires states and other regulatory authorities to share data electronically with EPA. The data that these regulatory authorities will share with EPA includes the data they receive from regulated entities, along with the compliance monitoring (e.g., inspection findings), violation determination and enforcement action data they generate themselves.

What does this mean for CDPS permits reporting?

The EPA has delegated the State of Colorado to oversee NPDES compliance. In order to ensure compliance with the Electronic Reporting Rule, the Colorado Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) holds the expectation that all CDPS permits electronically submit all reports and data required by the permit, in accordance with the Electronic Reporting Rule. This means starting on or before December 21, 2016 all CDPS permits will be required to submit Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) electronically, regardless of what your permit says, unless you receive a waiver.

Why is EPA requiring electronic reporting?

EPA anticipates electronic reporting will save time and resources for regulated entities, states, tribes, territories, and the U.S. government by eliminating paper reports. EPA also expects electronic reporting to increase data accuracy, improve compliance and support the goal of providing better protection of the nation's waters. Electronic reporting will help provide greater clarity on who is and who is not in compliance and enhance transparency by providing a timelier, more complete, more accurate and nationally-consistent set of data about the NPDES program. It will provide EPA and states the ability to strategically address the most serious water pollution problems while using limited resources efficiently.

When does electronic reporting begin and what information will be submitted electronically?

The first phase of electronic reporting begins on December 21, 2016. Regulated entities that currently submit DMRs will begin submitting these reports electronically instead of on paper on or before **December 21, 2016**. WQCD strongly encourages regulated entities to begin reporting electronically, prior to the December 21, 2016 deadline. At the same time, regulated entities that submit Biosolids/Sewage Sludge Annual Program Reports to EPA (but not to state governments) will begin submitting these reports electronically. Also at the same time, states and other regulatory authorities will begin sharing their compliance monitoring (e.g., inspection findings), violation determination and enforcement action data electronically.

The second phase of electronic reporting begins on December 21, 2020. Regulated entities that currently submit certain other CDPS reports must begin submitting these reports electronically instead of on paper on or before December 21, 2020. Reports covered in the second phase include Notices of Intent to discharge in compliance with an CDPS general permit, Biosolids/Sewage Sludge Annual Program Reports submitted to state governments, and a number of other CDPS program reports.

Who must report electronically?

Electronic reporting potentially affects all NPDES-regulated entities that are required to submit the reports discussed above. These entities include all NPDES-permitted facilities, whether covered by an individual permit or general permit, industrial users located in cities without approved local pretreatment programs, and governmental entities that have received NPDES program authorization or are implementing portions of the NPDES program in a cooperative agreement with EPA. This means all CDPS permits must report electronically. Importantly, the rule does not change who is required to submit CDPS information. It only changes the method by which information is provided (i.e., electronic rather than paper-based). Also, the rule includes flexibility to grant temporary or emergency waivers from electronic reporting. To obtain an electronic reporting waiver, a regulated entity must first submit an electronic reporting waiver request to WQCD and receive approval.

How will electronic reporting be accomplished?

Regulated entities and state and federal regulators will use existing, available information technology to submit, share, and manage the required data. EPA is working with states, tribes, territories, and third-party software vendors to develop and have in place all of the necessary electronic reporting tools. Recognizing that many states, tribes, and territories have their own electronic data systems and reporting tools for managing NPDES data, the electronic reporting rule provides flexibility on the specific data systems and reporting tools to be used.

EPA has developed electronic reporting tools for NPDES data and is making them available to states. EPA's tools are web-based and require only a computer, an internet browser (e.g., Microsoft Internet Explorer), and high-speed access to the Internet (i.e., DSL, fiber optic). These tools communicate securely, requiring passwords and known responses to security questions. They are designed to provide your electronic submittals with the same level of legal dependability as paper submittals. States have the option of using EPA's tools directly, installing and hosting their own version of EPA's tools, or developing their own tools. The State of Colorado has chosen the option of utilizing EPA's NetDMR tool for the electronic reporting of DMR data for all CDPS permits.

I have a CDPS permit or currently submit CDPS reports. Where can I find more information?

For more information specific to CDPS regulated entities, see the [e-Reporting Brochure](#) or contact the NetDMR Help Line at cdphe.wqnetdmrhelp@state.co.us or 303-691-4046.

Where can I find more information in general?

- For general information on electronic CDPS reporting to WQCD visit <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/e-reporting-rule-discharge-monitoring-report-information>
- For general information on EPA's NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/compliance/final-national-pollutant-discharge-elimination-system-npdes-electronic-reporting-rule>.