

SRCS D's Discharge Permit Compliance Record



Background

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972 established a control program for ensuring that communities have clean water by regulating the release of contaminants into our country's waterways. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal agency responsible for implementing the CWA. In California, the EPA has delegated authority to the state to regulate water quality. The State of California's Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) writes regulations and issues and enforces permits for dischargers in the Central Valley, including the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Permits that limit the amount of pollutants discharged are required of all municipal and industrial wastewater dischargers under the **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** permit program. In accordance with its NPDES permit, Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District monitors and tracks its compliance in literally hundreds of required areas. Examples of constituents monitored on a regular basis include chlorine, copper, lead, silver, zinc, lindane, mercury and chloroform, among others. Other conditions monitored include effluent temperature, discharge dilution ratio, and effluent pH.

There are a total of 67 effluent limits identified in the District's permit. Some monitoring is tracked minute to minute, (such as pH and discharge dilution); other tracking may occur on hourly, daily, weekly, or other intervals. As a result of its excellent operational record and robust monitoring program:

- SRCS D has received numerous **National Association of Clean Water Agencies "Peak Performance" awards** for its excellent compliance record. SRCS D received the Gold award in 1995 and 2006, and the Silver award in 1998, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2008.
- SRCS D has always complied with its NPDES permit requirement that our effluent cannot result in fish mortality in the Sacramento River.

SRCS D Maintains an Exceptional Compliance Record – 99.999% overall compliance!

SRCS D's overall compliance record for the time period from year 2000 to 2009 stands at an impressive **99.999%**. For added perspective, this number is based on **8,000 individual measurements taken EACH DAY**.

Committing Time and Resources to Ensure a Continued Outstanding Compliance Record

Permit compliance is a major focus for SRCS D. In order to assure a continued high compliance record, the District commits significant staff and resources to the job, and participates in numerous partnerships, which support the District's ability to achieve this record. Examples include:

- The District's sophisticated, on-site **Environmental Laboratory, accredited by the State of California**, is among the finest of such labs in the nation. The laboratory's professional environmental scientists, biologists and technical staff provide quality services to meet routine or the most challenging analytical needs for studies or monitoring programs. The full service lab tests wastewater during every phase of treatment. Tests are conducted for many different constituents that can be found in wastewater so that we know the treated water will not adversely impact the environment.



Staff at work in SRCS D's Environmental Laboratory.

- The District’s **water quality sampling boat** – “**The Guardian**” – travels the Sacramento River, monitoring water quality parameters and collecting water samples at upstream and downstream sites of the Regional's Wastewater Plant discharge into the Sacramento River. This monitoring is required weekly throughout the year by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board as part of the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant's discharge permit.
- **Significant staff resources and time are allocated to compliance reporting** to ensure compliance with our NPDES permit. In addition, the Treatment Plant receives an annual compliance inspection by the Environment Protection Agency and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- The Treatment Plant conducts **continuous monitoring** activities. These include continuous monitoring for toxicity, and the use of composite samplers that continuously collect a sample of treated effluent. **Continuous monitoring is more accurate than “grab” samples** which represent only single points in time.
- The Treatment Plant’s **highly automated Plant Computer Control System (PCCS)** allows the District to continuously monitor all areas of the Plant **around the clock** – which helps reduce potential problems and avoid violations.



The “Guardian” staff collect samples along the Sacramento River.



A state-of-the-art Plant Computer Control System center keeps track of key Plant facilities and operations on a minute-to-minute basis.

Outreach and Education Efforts Provide Additional, Long Term Benefits

- **Community education and outreach efforts** are proactively conducted by the District in areas such as lindane, pesticide, pharmaceuticals, and mercury reduction. The District’s award-winning mercury reduction education program included residential thermometer collection events; hospital, university and dental outreach; and advertising campaigns.
- The District conducts and also helps fund a variety of **watershed stewardship efforts** aimed at educating members of the public to become better stewards of the environment, thereby improving water quality in the watershed.



Source reduction of pollutants through public education outreach is an important District activity.