
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Small Vessel General Permit (sVGP)

Summary

EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) vessels program regulates incidental discharges from the normal operation of vessels under the guidelines of the Clean Water Act. The program relies on two versions of a general permit.

The Vessel General Permit (VGP) offers NPDES permit coverage for ballast water and other discharges associated with commercial vessels greater than 79 feet in length, greater than 300 gross tons in weight and capable of holding or discharging greater than 8 cubic meters of ballast water. The permit was issued initially in 2008, reissued on December 19, 2013 and effective for five years thereafter. For more information on eligibility, obtaining coverage, monitoring and reporting under the VGP please visit <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels-incident-discharge-permitting-3>.

The small Vessel General Permit (sVGP) offers NPDES permit coverage for discharges incidental to the normal operation of non-military and non-recreational vessels less than 79 feet in length. Previously, discharges other than ballast water, did not require a NPDES permit for vessels less than 79 feet due to a 2 year permitting moratorium which expired December 18, 2014. More information on the sVGP is presented below.

Who must apply?

Owners/operators of non-military, non-recreational vessels less than 79 feet in length must obtain NPDES permit coverage under EPA's sVGP. Recreational vessels are exempt as the Clean Boating Act of 2008 (an amendment to the Clean Water Act) covers best management practices, regulations and performance standards for normal operations of these vessels. A recreational vessel does not include a vessel that is both subject to US Coast Guard inspection and either engaged in commercial use or carries paying passengers.

What is required?

The sVGP requires vessel owners and operators to meet certain requirements for inspections, monitoring, recordkeeping and reporting.

1. Read and sign (signatory requirements 40CFR122.22) the Permit Authorization and Record of Inspection (PARI) Form. To maintain valid sVGP coverage the signed, updated form must be kept on board the vessel at all times.
2. Conduct quarterly visual inspections as outlined in permit Part 3.2 and certify the inspections on the PARI form.
3. Retain all records (e.g., PARI form, inspection records, noncompliance form) for a period of at least 3 years from the date the permit expires or the date the operator's authorization to discharge is terminated. Records may be kept electronically if legally dependable, a similar format to the paper record and still accessible to an inspector.

4. Document any instances of noncompliance within the Annual Noncompliance Form (Appendix B) and submit to the EPA Vessels Region One contact by February 28 of the following calendar year.

Why must I comply?

A Congressional moratorium exempted all incidental discharges, with the exception of ballast water, from non-recreational, non-military vessels less than 79 feet in length from needing a NPDES permit. The moratorium **expired December 18, 2014**. The sVGP was initiated to offer an easily implemented permit with common sense best management practices for smaller vessels.

What are examples of the restrictions and requirements?

The permit specifies best management practices for several broad discharge management categories including fuel management, engine and oil control, solid and liquid waste management, deck washdown and runoff, vessel hull maintenance, graywater, fish hold effluent, ballast water, and overboard cooling water discharge. Detailed requirements are in Part 2 of the permit. Please note, sewage and graywater discharge restrictions and prohibitions for New Hampshire waters have not changed.

Are the requirements the same across the United States?

No. The Clean Water Act allows states to enforce more stringent requirements for discharges into their State's waters. These requirements can be found in Part 7 of the permit and should be consulted prior to entering any State's waters.

For New Hampshire, the No Discharge Area (NDA) conditions for gray and black water remain the same. The coastal NDA consists of all tidal and estuarine waters, including all bays and rivers to the tidal dams, and all ocean waters within three nautical miles of the New Hampshire shoreline and Isles of Shoals. All boat sewage discharge (including graywater containing sewage), whether treated or untreated, is prohibited per 70FR56465 (FRL-7975-3). The inland lakes of New Hampshire are NDAs for both sewage and gray water per RSA 487:1-14.

Where can I find more information and forms for the sVGP?

EPA Vessel Discharges

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels-incident-discharge-permitting-2>

sVGP permit

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels-incident-discharge-permitting-4>

Permit Authorization and Record of Inspection (PARI)

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/permit-authorization-and-record-inspection-pari-forms>