Stormwater Permitting Requirements for North Carolina's Marinas, Shipyards and Boatyards

Since 1990, the federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations have mandated that certain industrial activities—including activities at marinas, shipyards and boatyards—be monitored and permitted to reduce the impact of polluted stormwater runoff that enters the nation's waterways. The state Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is the agency responsible for implementing this program in North Carolina. Now, two decades later, our state's rapid growth and development rates make the protection of our water resources more critical than ever before.

What is stormwater runoff? It is rain or snow-melt that flows over land and other surfaces following a precipitation event. As the runoff travels along, it picks up pollutants in its path and carries them to the nearest waterway, stream or storm drain. Stormwater runoff washes many types of pollutants into our surface waters, including chemicals, litter, bacteria, motor fluids and much more.

Why is it such a problem at marinas, shipyards and boatyards? The vast majority of these facilities are located only a short distance (or adjacent to) creeks, streams, wetlands, lakes, rivers and other waterways. Activities such as paint removal, sanding, engine maintenance, hull surface preparation and washing are specific to these facilities. Those activities generate high levels of particularly toxic pollutants including heavy metals, fuel, oil, solvents, paint solids and detergents. The presence of these types of pollutants, combined with the close proximity to surface waters, greatly increases the risk of generating highly polluted stormwater runoff. This is why your facility requires a stormwater permit.

What is a stormwater permit? The DWQ industrial general permit (NCG190000) allows stormwater discharges from certain activities associated with marinas and ship or boat building and repair. Requirements of this permit aim to reduce the level of pollutants in stormwater runoff that flows to nearby creeks, streams, wetlands and waterways. The end result is greater water quality protection.

Who is required to get a stormwater permit? Facilities such as marinas and ship or boat yards that provide vessel maintenance, building and repair, or other activities deemed by DWQ to be similar, are required to obtain this permit. A facility must have this permit unless all industrial activities are performed indoors and there is no potential for contact with, or impact to, stormwater runoff.

What if I fail to get a permit and continue to operate my facility? Civil penalties of up to $25,000 a day per violation can be assessed against facilities that fail to obtain a stormwater permit, violate the conditions of their permit or violate water quality standards.

How will complying with state permitting laws help my business? Tourism and recreation are multi-billion dollar industries in North Carolina, in large part due to the pristine beauty of our water resources that include streams, lakes, rivers, bays, marshes, the Intracoastal Waterway and ocean. Protecting those resources is an investment in the future of your industry and our state's economy.

What can I do to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff from my facility? There are a variety of "best management practices" (BMPs) that help to reduce the risk of pollutants entering stormwater. Listed below are possible measures and methods for use at your facility.

Non-structural (practices or activities) BMPs:

- Eliminate exposure of materials and equipment by moving items to indoor locations.
- Practice good housekeeping on-site: handle and store all materials in an orderly fashion.
- Exchange hazardous materials for non-hazardous ones whenever possible.
- Establish a set schedule of leak and maintenance checks to minimize the risk of spills.
- Be sure staff is trained to respond immediately to clean up any spills that occur.
- Establish bulk storage tank procedures that minimize the risk of spills during loading and unloading.
- Maintain wash pads and keep them cleared of paint chips, debris and particles from site activities.

Structural (equipment or devices) BMPs:

- Create containment dikes around the loading areas of bulk-liquid storage containers.
- Build roofs and secondary containment around materials to prevent exposure to stormwater.
- Convert from a liquid operation to a dry operation for hull maintenance and cleaning.
- Minimize contamination by using tarps or other devices to collect debris such as paint chips from boat maintenance and paint removal areas.
- Locate hull maintenance areas as far away as possible from waterways.

What about pressure washing and other activities that generate water discharges at my facility?
Many marina and shipyard or boatyard activities generate wastewater. *A stormwater permit does not authorize wastewater discharges.*

What is wastewater? It is water that flows from a work area and contains waste material as a direct result of a certain activity. Typical wastewater discharge sources include, but are not limited to, bilge and ballast water, cooling water, sanitary wastes, pressure and hand washing of vessels, blasting, sanding and fish-cleaning stations. Like stormwater runoff, wastewater from marinas and boatyards easily flows into nearby or adjacent waterways, impairing water quality.

What actions should I take to eliminate wastewater discharges from my facility?

- Collect wash water in a storage tank and hire a certified waste handler to pump and haul it away.
- Install collection systems around wash areas, directing wash water to a holding tank for proper disposal or to a sanitary sewer (if approved by your local government's wastewater treatment plant).
- Install a collection device that holds all wastewater but doesn't release it to surface waters. An evaporative system may help with this.
- Closed-loop recycle systems collect wash water for treatment and reuse. Note: Due to the high toxicity of wash water, even after treatment, it is not allowed to be discharged on land or into surface waters. Contact a certified waste handler for proper disposal as needed.
- Portable wash stations collect and contain wash water during the pressure-washing process. Some facilities choose to pump water out of the portable wash station, store it in a holding tank until capacity is reached, then have the wastewater hauled away by a certified waste handler.

Are there any programs that recognize compliant, clean marinas?
The N.C. Clean Marina Program offers incentives for becoming a greener, cleaner facility. Clean Marinas receive a flag to display at their facility and are acknowledged on several agency Web sites, as well as on the annual "Coastal Boating Guide" map which is distributed at welcome centers and tourism offices statewide. To learn more about the program, visit http://dcm2.enr.state.nc.us/Marinas/clean.htm or call (252) 838-0887.

Where can I obtain information on permitting and how to begin the application process?
Contact the DWQ Regional Office nearest your facility:

Asheville	(828) 296-4500	Washington	(252) 946-6481
Fayetteville	(910) 433-3300	Wilmington	(910) 796-7215
Mooresville	(704) 663-1699	Winston-Salem	(336) 771-5000
Raleigh	(919) 791-4200	Central Office	(919) 807-6300

Where can I obtain information on stormwater best management practices for my facility?
For more information, please see the "DWQ Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual" available online at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ws/su/bmp-manual.

What other educational resources are available?
N.C. Marina Permitting: http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/swp/ws/cu/marinas or (919) 807-6371.
N.C. Stormwater Outreach & Education: www.ncstormwater.org or (919) 807-6363.
N.C. Pollution Prevention & Environmental Assistance: http://www.p2pays.org/ or (919) 571-4100.