

# Environmental Services

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## Council protects water quality, public health

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES), a division of the Metropolitan Council, is responsible for collecting and treating wastewater from approximately 90% of the population in the seven-county Twin Cities area. MCES also conducts research related to water quality and supply, and provides technical assistance to local governments. Among its primary responsibilities, MCES:

- Maintains approximately 600 miles of regional interceptor sewers that collect flow from 5,000 miles of sewers owned by 105 communities.
- Treats an average of 260 million gallons of wastewater daily at seven regional treatment plants.
- Works with approximately 800 industrial clients to substantially reduce the amount of pollution entering the wastewater collection system.
- Provides water-resources monitoring and analysis for the region.
- Partners with numerous public, private and nonprofit

groups committed to a clean environment.

- Conducts research and develops policies and plans related to the region's water supply.

## Services support regional growth

The services that MCES provides protect public health and the environment while supporting regional growth. MCES ensures that:

- Sufficient sewer capacity exists to serve planned development.
- Sufficient capital investments are made to preserve water quality in the region.
- Wastewater collection and treatment is competitive for cost and quality.
- Local plans provide for adequate water supply and prevention of pollution from nonpoint sources, such as urban and agricultural storm water runoff.

## An outstanding record

In 2009, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) recognized MCES's Hastings, St.

Croix Valley, and Seneca wastewater treatment plants for 18, 17 and 8 consecutive years, respectively, of full compliance with environmental permits (based on their 2008 performance). Gold Awards, for no permit exceedances in 2008, went to the Metro, Eagles Point, Blue Lake, Empire and Rosemount plants.

MCES also earned a special Operations Award from NACWA in 2009 for its [Inflow/Infiltration Reduction Program](#). The program is a partnership with communities designed to reduce excessive inflow and infiltration of clear water into the sanitary sewer system.

## Boosting quality, allowing for growth

MCES implements a capital improvement program that maintains and improves the quality of the regional wastewater system infrastructure, supports regional growth and meets regulatory requirements. Current projects are described below.

**Energy reduction.** MCES is implementing an ambitious, four-year effort to reduce energy consumption by at least

15% at its facilities. Projects at the Metro Plant include cleaning up air diffusers, optimizing steam generation to heat buildings and run electricity-generating turbines, and installing energy-saving lighting systems.

**New interceptors.** Engineers are designing the new Northeast Interceptor to serve Forest Lake and Hugo. Construction of the 10-mile pipe and three lift stations will start in 2015.

A new, larger interceptor sewer is being built to serve expected growth in Richfield and Edina. Construction of the four-mile pipe will conclude in 2011.

**Treatment plant upgrades.** Major upgrades are planned at the Seneca Plant in Eagan and the Blue Lake Plant in Shakopee, including increased phosphorus removal and improved disinfection processes.

**Sewer improvements.** Improvements are being made to regional sewer facilities in several communities west and south of Lake Minnetonka. The project includes replacing two mechanical pumping stations and forcemain interceptors, and refurbishing two other pumping stations.

### Cost-efficient and responsive

MCES is recognized nationally for its progressive management and market competitiveness.

According to a survey by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, the Council's charges for wastewater collection and treatment continue to rank in the lowest 25% among similar-sized agencies nationwide.

MCES works with and for citizens in a number of ways, including partnering on environmental improvement efforts; providing educational programs, meetings and forums, surveys and newsletters; and addressing process-related and industrial odor-control issues.

### Monitoring regional water quality

MCES implements a variety of strategies to meet the Council's policy of achieving no adverse impact on the region's water quality. MCES provides water quality monitoring and analysis on the region's lakes and rivers; partners with public, private and nonprofit groups to improve water quality; and assists with watershed planning and management.

MCES's work is guided by the *2030 Water Resources Management Policy Plan*, a chapter of the *Metropolitan Development Guide*. The guide details the Council's policies and strategies for coordinating the orderly and economic development of the region.

### Coordinating water supply planning

In 2005, the Minnesota Legislature directed the Council to carry out planning activities addressing the water supply needs of the seven-county metro area. The law requires the Council to maintain a base of technical information upon which to make sound water supply development decisions. It also requires the Council to develop and periodically update a regional water supply master plan. With assistance from a Metropolitan Water Supply Advisory Committee, comprising state and local officials, the Council developed a plan that guides local water supply planning and future regional investments. The plan emphasizes conservation, inter-jurisdictional cooperation and long-term sustainability.

### For more information

- Visit [www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org) and click on Wastewater.
- You can also call 651-602-1005.
- Related fact sheets:
  - [Wastewater Services](#)
  - [Inflow/Infiltration](#)
  - [Metro Plant Solids Mgmt.](#)
  - [Water Supply Planning](#)
  - [Surface Water Planning](#)

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