

OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

News bulletin from Metropolitan Council Environmental Services



September 2019 Issue #54

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) is one of five divisions of the Metropolitan Council, a regional public agency working for the seven-county metropolitan area. The mission of MCES is to provide wastewater services and integrated planning to ensure sustainable water quality and water supply for the region.

The Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section of MCES regulates and monitors over 850 industrial customers discharging to the sewer system. Our goal is to ensure compliance with local and federal regulations and reduce the amount of pollution entering the wastewater collection system. The IWPP Section also responds to sewer-related spills and community sewer problems. These functions protect MCES and the community collection and treatment facilities, process efficiency, operating personnel and the environment.

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Industrial pretreatment brings great benefits to customers and MCES

The Industrial Pretreatment Incentive Program (IPIP) is an innovative way that MCES addresses the increasing wastewater treatment needs as the metropolitan region grows. Through IPIP, MCES provides low-cost financing to permittees for installing on-site wastewater treatment systems that treat high-strength waste before it's discharged to the sanitary sewer.

The program is beneficial to participating permittees because it reduces the strength charge fees that they pay to MCES as well as reporting requirements. The program benefits MCES by delaying the need for expansion of wastewater treatment facilities and it benefits the region by keeping operating costs down.

IPIP participant Kemps cultured dairy products plant in Farmington, MN is realizing the benefits

"We had been working on an approval to install a reverse osmosis (RO) system at our Farmington plant since 2012," said David Seefeldt, plant manager at Kemps. "When the opportunity came along to partner with MCES and apply for participation in IPIP, the project finally came together and has proven to be a win/win for both parties."



Kemps Reverse Osmosis system installed and operating at their Farmington plant.

Kemps was able to get the RO system on one of their two product lines operating by November 2018 and is achieving a 90-95% targeted chemical oxygen demand (COD) reduction in the effluent from this ultra-filtration system. In the first reporting period after full implementation of the RO system, Kemps overall COD loading was 57% less than previous reports, resulting in \$60,000 per quarter savings (56%) in assessed strength charge fees.

Kemps efforts result in positive cascading effects for MCES's wastewater treatment plant in Empire Township

Our partnership with Kemps has been a very positive experience, according to staff at MCES's Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant. Kemps' successful operation of the RO system reduces the organic and nutrient loading to the Empire Plant which has positive cascading effects throughout the plant.

Continued...

Important dates:

Oct 15, 2019 – All Liquid Waste Hauler quarterly reports due online.

Oct 31, 2019 – All Industrial and Special Discharge quarterly reports due online.

Jan 8, 15 and 29, 2020 – Online Reporting training sessions at Metro 94 Business Center – Saint Paul, MN

IPIP bringing great benefits continued...

The high-strength waste recovered from the RO system is captured and transported directly to the plant's anaerobic digester, where it increases biogas production for beneficial use as fuel within the treatment plant.



With the great benefits IPIP is bringing to industry, MCES, and the region, we're considering accepting applications again. If your business is interested, please contact your [MCES permit engineer](#) or Bob Nordquist, IWPP manager, at bob.nordquist@metc.state.mn.us.

Online reporting is now mandatory

After receiving approval from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to make using our Industrial Online Reporting System (IORS) mandatory, we are now requiring online reporting for all submittals.

If you are not yet enrolled to report online, please enroll today. For more information about the system and how to enroll, visit <https://metro council.org/IORS>.

Support is available

We want to make the transition to reporting online as smooth and hassle-free as possible. If you need help, there are many ways to seek support.



Online support tools are available on the [IORS website](#). We encourage you to visit the website for access to help sheets, video instructions, forms, templates, etc.

In-person training sessions are scheduled for January 2020. During the session, members of our support team will give an in-depth look at the system, answer questions and provide hands-on, individual training.

Training Session Dates:

- January 8, 2020 9:30am – 12:00pm
- January 15, 2020 1:00pm – 3:30pm
- January 29, 2020 1:00pm – 3:30pm

Training Location:

Metro 94 Business Center
455 Etna Street North, Suite 32, Saint Paul

If you'd like to attend a training session, have questions about online reporting or need further assistance, please contact our support team. They are available Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 4:00pm.

Call (651) 602-4789 or email:

MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us

ICC – the new Industrial SAC determination and payment option



Based on feedback from our industrial customers, we changed the way initial SAC (Sewer Availability Charge) baselines are determined and how we assess extra capacity charges for permitted industries after the baseline is set. This change can reduce your up-front costs, and your ongoing costs will better match your business cycle.

Industries will continue to pay the one-time commercial SAC, plus up to three SAC units to cover their potential maximum industrial discharge to the local jurisdiction or tribal office.

As of January 1, 2019, we have eliminated capacity demand reviews when permits are renewed. Instead, with each self-monitoring report (SMR) you submit, we multiply your facility's existing SAC baseline by your reported operating days to determine the wastewater discharge volumes covered by your baseline. If your reporting period discharge is at or below your existing baseline, you will not be invoiced capacity charges. For every 1,000 gallons discharged above your baseline, you'll be assessed and invoiced for **ICC (Industrial Capacity Charge)** and have the following payment options:

Which payment option is best for you?



Ongoing

If your process flows fluctuate, or if you intend to implement water reduction measures, you may choose to pay ICC directly to the Council for each reporting period that you discharge above your baseline.



Up-front

If you are confident that your business will continue to discharge the higher volume of wastewater for several years, you may decide to pay a one-time SAC payment to your local jurisdiction or tribal office at the current rate and permanently increase your baseline.



Combination

If your discharge increases are steady, but the SAC payment is too large, you may choose to pay a combination of ICC and SAC.

Change benefits industrial customers

- Reduce up-front costs while your business gets established.
- Ongoing costs will better match your business cycle.
- Your permit renewal will no longer require SAC payments if you are discharging over your baseline.
- Water conservation efforts will reduce capacity charges as well as volume charges.

For more information or if you have questions about how these changes affect your business, contact Nanette Ewald at 651-602-4767, nanette.ewald@metc.state.mn.us, or your [MCES permit engineer](#).

2019 Customer Workshop Summary

This spring, IWPP hosted three customer workshops:

- March 21 – Liquid Waste Hauler Customer Workshop
- April 18 & April 25 – Industrial Waste Customer Workshops

These workshops have proven to hold a great deal of insight for all participants. This platform of collaboration between MCES employees and customers is critical to the success of the IWPP program.

Workshop participants included members of the Environmental Services Executive Team, IWPP staff and representatives from a broad and diverse set of businesses and communities.



Bob Nordquist, IWPP manager, facilitating breakout session.

We conducted breakout sessions and discussed a wide range of topics: 2020 rates and fees, Industrial Capacity Charge (ICC), online reporting, communications, customer survey and emerging issues.

During the Liquid Waste Hauler customer workshop, the discussion consisted of topics specific to our hauler customers: liquid waste receiving facilities, the services provided and how the sites can improve, online reporting and the Excel reporting program.



Bob Golden, IWPP assistant manager, and Matthew Michaelis, IWPP engineer, discuss program with LWH customer.

Thank you to everyone who attended and gave their input to these valuable discussions. Your participation will help guide and strengthen MCES' customer service focus. We will continue to seek input and we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions or feedback. If you were unable to attend the 2019 Customer Workshops, materials are available on our [website](#).

We look forward to seeing everyone at the 2020 customer workshops. Invitations will be sent early next year by postcard and by email METC@public.govdelivery.com. (GovDelivery is a news delivery system. This is not an active email account.)

MCES Customer Satisfaction Survey results are in

Results show 88% of MCES's industrial customers are satisfied, or very satisfied, with IWPP's services.

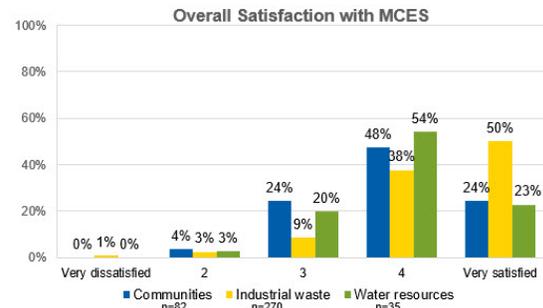
MCES is committed to strengthening relationships with our customers. In late 2018, we contracted with a third-party vendor to conduct a customer survey to gather customer perceptions of MCES, measure customer satisfaction, and identify our strengths in customer relationships and areas in which we can improve.

Approximately one-third of our permitted industrial customers representing all permit types participated in the survey.

Our strengths

The Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section of MCES was rated very high in courteousness, knowledge, responsiveness to questions, transparency in the permitting process, respectfulness with enforcement issues, and communications overall.

Those surveyed who enrolled in online reporting report the enrollment and reporting process to be easy, and the in-person training we provide is useful.



Improvement opportunities

Areas identified by the survey in which we can improve are:

- Customer awareness of the Open Channel News bulletin and our website
- Usefulness of monitoring reports and providing an inspection summary report
- Additional online reporting training, especially for smaller industries and clarification on reporting validation messaging, missing submittals and uploading data issues.

We will use these survey results to help prioritize work that improves customer service. IWPP is developing a work plan to address improvement areas and ensure we continue to be proactive, accessible, responsive, respectful and transparent. This survey provides an initial baseline to measure progress. MCES will perform a survey again in 3-4 years to see how we've improved.

Thank you to all who participated in the survey. We appreciate your time and value your feedback. We continue to seek input and encourage all our industrial customers to contact us with feedback on our level of service and how we can improve. Please contact Bob Nordquist, IWPP manager, at bob.nordquist@metc.state.mn.us.

Meet IWPP Compliance Officer

Pete Sandberg, Compliance Officer, joined IWPP in August 2018. Pete has been with MCES since 2000. Prior to joining IWPP, he was manager of the Solids Management Business Unit at the Metro Plant. He has 20 years of experience in environmental regulation, including 11 years at the MPCA and seven years of compliance auditing at MCES. Pete has a bachelor of science degree in geology as well as a juris doctor degree.



Pete enjoys traveling. He's a self-proclaimed "World's Worst Gardener" but hasn't given up hope! Pete also designs and makes stained glass panels.

Meet the Summer IWPP Technicians

Porter Sartor and Natalie Lundell

Summer is a busy time of year for the IWPP section. It's when we conduct many monitoring projects and wastewater treatment studies. Having an extra crew to assist helps us meet industrial monitoring requirements. It also gives us the extra resources needed to investigate collection system and treatment plant issues. A bonus is we get to introduce enthusiastic recruits to the world of wastewater treatment, and they get valuable experience to take with them on their next adventure.



Porter Sartor graduated from Buena Vista University with a degree in environmental science. His favorite part about working at IWPP is that he gets to use the knowledge he gained from his undergrad program.

We asked Porter where he sees himself in five years. He responded, "I hope to have a stable job and own a home. I'm unsure of what's next in line, but I'd like to be in a career that helps the common person or be a part of something honorable."

Natalie Lundell has an associate degree from Inver Hills Community College and is attending Minnesota State University, Mankato. Her favorite part about working at IWPP is working with people who are passionate about what they do.

We asked Natalie what keeps her motivated. She responded with her favorite quote from Howard A. Tullman, "You get what you work for, not what you wish for."



Keeping mercury out of wastewater

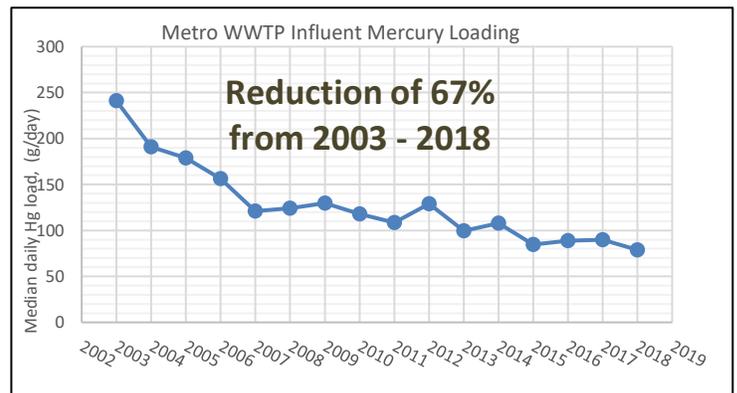
Through the [MCES Amalgam Recovery Program](#), and with the help of the Minnesota Dental Association and dental offices across the seven-county metropolitan area, we are minimizing the release of amalgam and mercury into the wastewater and environment.

General practice dental and endodontic offices located within the MCES service area that place or remove amalgam must comply with our Amalgam Recovery Program. To comply, dental offices must:

- Install and operate an approved amalgam separator.
- Follow best management practices for dental offices.
- Submit annual statements through the Industrial Online Reporting System (IORS).
- Maintain a log of amalgam separator inspection and maintenance activities.

By complying with the program, which is administered by IWPP and fulfills the requirements of the EPA Dental Effluent Rule, dental offices avoid the need for a wastewater permit, paying permit fees, and sampling and analyzing their wastewater.

Since the program began in 2003, we have seen a 67% reduction in the amount of mercury coming into the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant.



IWPP principal technician Kevin Rogers, checking a SolmeteX amalgam separator.

IWPP staff conduct site checks of registered dental offices to verify they have an approved amalgam separator installed and it's being properly operated and maintained.

There are nearly 700 dental offices currently registered in the program and that number continues to grow as new dental offices open and our service area expands.

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rates, fees, and ICC / SAC, contact:
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2020 Industrial User Rates and Fees



The 2020 Industrial User rates and fees were approved by the Metropolitan Council Environment Committee in July. The approved rates are as follows:

Strength Charge rates for wastewater discharged on site will increase to:

- \$0.254 per excess pound of total suspended solids (TSS)
- \$0.127 per excess pound of chemical oxygen demand (COD)



Full-cost recovery rates for treatment of industrial wastewater hauled to MCES disposal sites will remain at:

- \$0.413 per excess pound of TSS
- \$0.2065 per excess pound of COD

Production-based strength charge for microbrewery and brewpub facilities on General Permit will increase to:

- \$0.797 per beer barrel

Liquid Waste Hauler Load Charges:

- \$60.24 per 1,000 gallons for Domestic Septage and Commercial wastes
- \$11.29 per 1,000 gallons for Holding Tank wastes
- \$77.46 per 1,000 gallons for Portable Toilet wastes
- \$75.24 per 1,000 gallons for Collar County Domestic waste loads

Service fee for Out-of-Service Area loads to remain at \$15.00 per 1,000 gallons.

Industrial Capacity Charge (ICC) will increase to:

- \$2.14 per 1,000 gallons



Sewer Availability Charge (SAC) will remain at:

- \$2,485 per SAC unit (1 SAC unit = 274 gallons per day.) SAC is paid to the local community for use of the Metropolitan Disposal System (MDS) capacity.

The Temporary Capacity Charge (TCC) will remain at:

- \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons (SAC paid directly to MCES for temporary use of the MDS capacity)

Permit Fees (paid annually):

- \$1,050 to \$10,350 depending on permit status for Industrial, Special and Liquid Waste Hauler (LWH) Permits
- \$425 for Sewer Cleaning Waste Hauler General Permits
- \$475 for all other General Permits

**The initial LWH and Special Discharge permit fees are required at the time of the application.*



Visit [MCES Industrial User rates and fees site](#) for more information.

Let's stay connected!

To make sure you receive important notifications and information, add the following emails to your address book: MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us and METC@public.govdelivery.com. (GovDelivery is a news delivery system. This is not an active email account.)



If you need to update your contact information, please contact your [MCES permit engineer](#) or email iwpp@metc.state.mn.us.

