

OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

News bulletin from Metropolitan Council Environmental Services



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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 and Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section of MCES regulates and monitors more than 900 industrial customers discharging to the sanitary sewer systems. 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 wastewater collection and treatment facilities, process efficiency, operating personnel, and the environment.

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MCES responds to FOG task force recommendations

Fats, oils, and grease, or FOG, have been an ongoing problem throughout MCES's regional wastewater collection system and for the customer communities that are connected to it. As our region grows in population, we anticipate an increase in FOG-related blockages and problems in the system, as well as costs to mitigate the problems. To address this, MCES invited stakeholders from communities, food service establishments, and industry to participate in a FOG task force to consider "joining forces" and identify ways to tackle the problem together.

The task force met four times over the course of the summer and came up with the following recommendations.

Provide educational and outreach materials

Task force members expressed a great need for educational and outreach materials. In response, MCES will, with input from members, create a FOG toolkit and resource materials that will be available on our website for anyone to use, including:



- Best management practices for food service establishments
- A checklist for restaurant managers
- Answers to frequently asked questions about FOG
- Printable FOG posters
- Who to call listings for grease trap services and FOG-related questions
- Information on existing FOG codes and regulations
- A training video to assist with outreach and messaging efforts

Develop a regional FOG strategy

Task force members expressed that communities currently handle FOG problems in their local sanitary sewers alone, but not all communities have the resources or authority to fully address the ongoing issues and many could benefit from a regional approach. In response, MCES plans to assemble a future task force with representatives from customer communities and industry to explore the possibilities of a regional strategy for combatting FOG in the wastewater collection system. Please contact Andrew.Wiatros@metc.state.mn.us if you are interested in participating.

Tina Nelson, IWPP manager and task force sponsor says, "The task force members have a great passion for this work, and I am grateful for the time and commitment they have devoted to helping us reduce the amount of FOG that is discharged to the sewer. The FOG toolkit will be an invaluable resource to all who utilize it."

Important Dates:

- October 16, 2023 – All Liquid Waste Hauler quarterly reports due [online](#)
- October 31, 2023 – All Standard and Special quarterly reports due [online](#)

MCES treatment plants achieve Peak Performance status

All nine MCES wastewater treatment plants earned [Peak Performance Awards](#) from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). Each plant was recognized at the July 11-14 NACWA conference, with either Platinum or Gold awards, for 100% permit limit compliance in 2022.

In 2022, our plants successfully met a combined total of 24,400 individual limits. "Achieving this level of compliance is an impressive feat that takes day-in and day-out commitment to excellence by countless employees in wide-ranging roles," said **Leisa Thompson**, general manager, Environmental Services.

"We couldn't achieve this level of performance without the continuing efforts of our industrial customers in meeting their discharge permit limits through pretreatment and best management practices," says Tina Nelson, manager, Industrial Waste. "Thank you for all you do to comply with your MCES permit!"



Platinum Award

Five or more consecutive years of compliance

- Hastings (32 years)
- St. Croix Valley (31 years)
- Blue Lake (17 years)
- Eagles Point (17 years)
- Empire (15 years)
- Metropolitan (11 years)
- Seneca (6 years)

Gold Award

One to four consecutive years of compliance

- Rogers (4 years)
- East Bethel (2 years)

IPIP is closing at the end of this year

IPIP phase II to be determined

The Metropolitan Council is closing the first phase of the Industrial Pretreatment Incentive Program (IPIP) on December 31, 2023. The goal of the program is to reduce energy costs needed to treat high strength waste and delay capital costs for expanding solids capacity at our treatment plants, which results in lower costs for our rate payers.

This program began in 2018 and allowed Met Council to partner with and incentivize high strength permitted industrial dischargers to implement on-site pretreatment of their wastewater. The incentive provided qualifying industrial users with Met Council financing for eligible capital costs at low AAA-rated rates, and a capital lease over 10 years with possible forgiveness of up to 30% of the annual payments when strength reduction goals were met.

Once this program closes, we will evaluate its success and will determine if and how to proceed with a second phase. If we proceed, we plan to design a second phase that is available to a broader group of industries, not just our highest strength dischargers. The goal of the program will remain the same – with the added benefit of extending the life our entire collection system.

Important Industrial Online Reporting System (IORS) updates

New Sample Results SMR Templates

We have revised the Excel templates used for uploading your sampling results into the IORS and added a new PFAS substances template. These templates have new options in the Substance and Analysis Method dropdown menus and must be used for submitting your sampling results going forward. The old Excel templates are obsolete and will no longer work when uploading data into the IORS.



The newest versions of the templates have been uploaded into the IORS and are available on our [Online Reporting](#) webpage. All affected permittees will be notified by email regarding the new templates that are available.

Facility Account Registration form is no longer required

The Facility Account Registration form is no longer required for enrollment, and if you have one on file with us, you no longer need to update it when contact information changes. All contact changes should be made in the IORS when submitting your reports. We ask that you also notify your MCES-assigned permit staff of any contact changes. Please continue to submit the Electronic Signature Agreement (ESA) form when creating a new IORS account.

New and improved IORS webpage

We have updated our Online Reporting webpage with an easier to use, cleaner look. It still contains all the information you need for setting up an account and completing submittals online. Please visit our new and improved webpage at www.metrocouncil.org/IORS

If you have any questions about these update or online reporting in general, please contact the IORS Helpline at 651-602-4789 or MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us.

MnTAP's 2023 intern projects result in big saving solutions for local industries

The Minnesota Technical Assistance Program's (MnTAP) 2023 metropolitan area intern projects resulted in solutions that could save local industries 29,570,000 gallons of water usage and \$488,000 annually, including significant environmental impacts beyond water conservation.

Avtec Finishing Systems of New Hope, MN

MnTAP Intern Lucas Clark Burnette (Civil Engineering - MS, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) helped Avtec Finishing Systems, a metal finishing facility, evaluate site water usage to identify conservation opportunities. Lucas recommended conductivity-controlled rinses (planned), as well as the installation of drain boards and tank covers (recommended). These recommendations have the potential of reducing water usage by 4,384,000 gallons with \$63,200 in savings annually.



St. Paul Beverage Solutions of St. Paul, MN

MnTAP Intern Zach Bahrke (Mechanical Engineering, University of St. Thomas) helped St. Paul Beverage Solutions, a dairy producer, quantify the water usage and make recommendations to conserve water. Zach recommended improvements to the bottle wash process (planned), optimizing clean-in-place or CIP system rinse timing (recommended), as well as utilizing an existing water source for closed-loop cooling (recommended). These recommendations have the potential of reducing water usage by 9,600,000 gallons, 11,800 therms of energy and \$97,700 annually.

Wholesale Produce Supply of Minneapolis, MN

MnTAP Intern Thomas Leibert (Chemical Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison) helped Wholesale Produce Supply, a fresh produce processor, evaluate process water usage to identify conservation opportunities. Thomas recommended installing more efficient spray and hose nozzles, as well as optimizing rinse run times (recommended). All project recommendations have the potential of reducing water usage by 1,025,000 gallons with approximately \$12,200 in annual cost savings.

Complete executive summaries of these projects and more will be featured in MnTAP's 2023 Solutions publication, which is coming soon. Access past year's editions and the upcoming publication at

<http://www.mntap.umn.edu/resources/publications/solutions/>

These water efficiency projects are supported by the Metropolitan Council Water Resources Group and funded by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. To learn more about this partnership with MnTAP visit [MnTAP - Metropolitan Council \(metrocouncil.org\)](http://www.metrocouncil.org)

Please welcome our new permit staff



Salomeh Rostami, Associate Engineer.

Salomeh has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from the University of Minnesota. Salomeh has always been passionate about environmental work, which was further solidified through educational experience. Salomeh comes to us with experience as a research assistant at the University of Minnesota, a wastewater treatment intern with Clark Technology, and an engineering intern with MCES. Salomeh is excited to be back at MCES pursuing a career in maintaining a clean environment for the region. Salomeh will be handling standard industrial discharge and special discharge permits, as well as hospital general permits.



Bryan Page, Environmental Scientist.

Bryan has a Master of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Oklahoma and Bachelor of Science in Environmental Chemistry and Environmental Science from Slippery Rock University. Bryan grew up in the woods of Pennsylvania and with an appreciation of the natural world. That upbringing led Bryan to a career dedicated to water treatment for the protection of the environment. Bryan comes to us with over 10 years of professional experience as an environmental scientist with BioMost Inc., an environmental chemist with Stream Restoration Inc., a research assistant with the University of Oklahoma, and a laboratory technician with Red River Laboratory and Consulting Company. Bryan will be handling standard industrial discharge permits, liquid waste hauler permits, as well as sewer waste cleaning general permits.

Salomeh and Bryan fill permit positions that were vacant due to assistant manager promotions.

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Metropolitan Council Environmental Services
Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention Section
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention Section Manager
Tina Nelson / 651-602-4728

For general information on the Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention Section, contact Jami Haider: 651-602-4703

For information about industrial user rates, fees, and ICC/SAC, contact Kristi Goble: 651-602-8114

For online reporting information and assistance, contact our support team: 651-602-4789

For further information on Open Channel News, contact Maggie Lundell: 651-602-4769



2024 Industrial User rates and fees adopted by Met Council

The following 2024 Industrial User rates and fees were adopted by the Metropolitan Council Environment Committee in July.

Permit fees (paid annually):

- \$700 to \$12,350 depending on permit status for Standard, Special, and Liquid Waste Hauler Permits
- \$450 for Sewer Cleaning Waste Hauler General Permits
- \$500 for all other General Permits

Strength charges for wastewater discharged on site:

- \$0.310 per excess pound of total suspended solids (TSS)
- \$0.155 per excess pound of chemical oxygen demand (COD)

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

- \$0.4130 per excess pound of TSS
- \$0.2065 per excess pound of COD

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

- \$0.972 per beer barrel

Liquid Waste Hauler load charges:

- \$12.74 per 1,000 gallons for Domestic Holding Tank wastes
- \$61.60 per 1,000 gallons for Domestic Septage and Commercial wastes
- \$78.45 per 1,000 gallons for Portable Toilet wastes
- \$76.60 per 1,000 gallons for Out-of-Service Area Domestic wastes

Service fee for Out-of-Service Area loads:

- \$15.00 per 1,000 gallons

Industrial Capacity Charge (ICC):

- \$2.31 per 1,000 gallons
- \$2.96 per 1,000 gallons Rural Center – East Bethel
- \$4.35 per 1,000 gallons Rural Center – Elko New Market



Sewer Availability Charge (SAC): (paid to the local community for use of the metropolitan disposal system (MDS))

- \$2,485 per SAC unit (1 unit = 274 gallons per day)
- \$3,185 per SAC unit Rural Center – East Bethel
- \$4,685 per SAC unit Rural Center – Elko New Market

Temporary Capacity Charge (TCC): (paid directly to MCES for temporary use of the MDS)

- \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons
- \$1.60 per 1,000 gallons Rural Center – East Bethel
- \$2.36 per 1,000 gallons Rural Center – Elko New Market

For more information and for the current MCES Industrial User rates and fees, visit the [MCES Industrial User Rates and Fees](#) website.

Let's stay connected!

To make sure you receive important information regarding your MCES permit, add the following emails to your address book:

MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us and METC@public.govdelivery.com.

(GovDelivery is a news delivery system, it is not an active email account.)

To update your contact information, please contact the [MCES staff](#) assigned to your permit or email iwpp@metc.state.mn.us.

