

# Clean Water Act



Pollutants regulated under the CWA include "priority" pollutants, including various toxic pollutants; "conventional" pollutants, such as biochemical oxygen demand, total suspended solids, fecal coliform, oil and grease, and pH; and "non-conventional" pollutants, including any pollutant not identified as either conventional or priority. The CWA regulates both direct and indirect discharges.

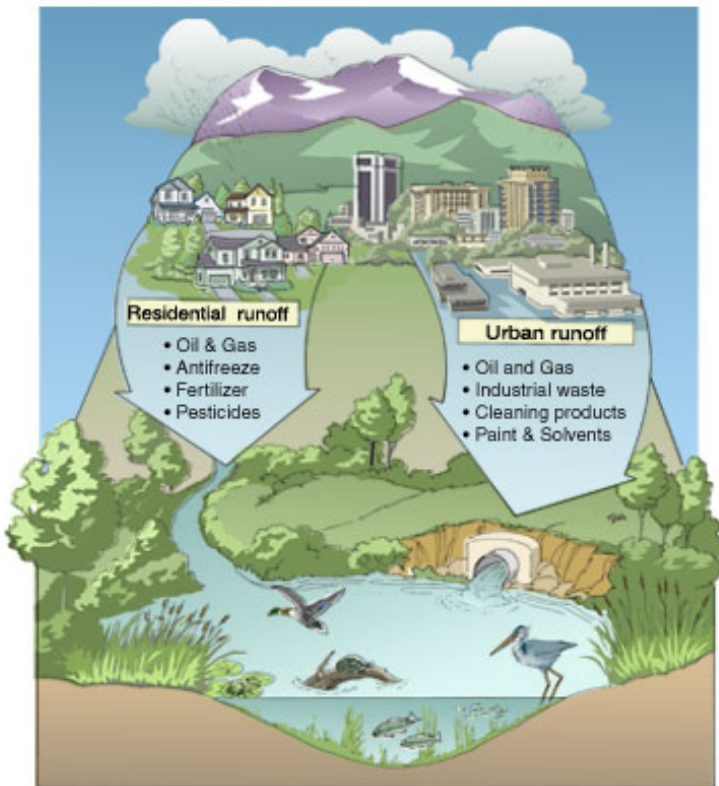
## Sections

**The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program** - controls direct discharges into navigable waters. Direct discharges or "point source" discharges are from sources such as pipes and sewers. NPDES permits, issued by either EPA or an authorized state/tribe contain industry-specific, technology-based and/or water-quality-based limits, and establish pollutant monitoring and reporting requirements. An NPDES permit may also include discharge limits based on federal or state/tribe water quality criteria or standards that were designed to protect designated uses of surface waters, such as supporting aquatic life or recreation.

**Storm Water Discharge** - As part of storm water permits, facilities are often required to implement pollution prevention plans. This reflects EPA's commitment to preventing pollution at the source, before it causes environmental problems that cost the public and private sectors in terms of lost resources and funding to correct or remediate environmental damages. Storm water pollution prevention plans must be prepared in accordance with good engineering practices. The plan should identify potential sources of pollution that may reasonably be expected to affect the quality of storm water discharges associated with industrial activity from the facility. The plan should also describe and ensure the implementation of practices that reduce the pollutants in storm water discharges.

## Total Maximum Daily Loads

Some waters in the nation still do not meet the Clean Water Act national goal of "fishable, swimmable" despite the fact that nationally required levels of pollution control technology have been implemented by many pollution sources. Clean Water Act Section 1313 addresses these waters that are not "fishable, swimmable" by requiring states to identify the waters and to develop total maximum daily loads for them, with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As such, TMDLs can play a key role in watershed management. Each state must identify waters at risk and establish Total Daily Maximum Loads to protect those waters. This includes identification of needed load reductions within a watershed from agricultural producers and other nonpoint sources. These load reductions are to be achieved through nonpoint source programs established under Clean Water Act Section 319 and Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendment (CZARA) section 6217.



## Nonpoint Source Pollution

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even underground sources of drinking water.

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