



Water Bureau

Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor • Steven E. Chester, Director

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

WATER BUREAU

CONSTITUTION HALL, 2 SOUTH
525 WEST ALLEGAN STREET
LANSING MI 48913

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO BOX 30273
LANSING MI 48909-7773

FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

District Matters, Compliance
Programs, Biosolids, Industrial
Pretreatment, Enforcement
517-241-1313

LANSING OPERATIONS DIVISION

DRINKING WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION

Community and Noncommunity
Drinking Water, Contamination
Investigation, Well Construction,
Source Water Protection,
Groundwater Dispute Resolution,
Water Withdrawal and Use, On-site
Sewage, Public Swimming Pools,
Campgrounds
517-241-1355

PERMITS SECTION

NPDES Permit Program,
Groundwater Discharge Permit
Program
Storm Water Program
517-241-1346

SURFACE WATER ASSESSMENT SECTION

Water Quality Standards,
Environmental Assessment,
Monitoring, Inland Lakes and
Remedial Action, Nonpoint Source
517-335-1180

The Water Bureau administers a number of programs that range from preventive to remedial and from voluntary to regulatory for the protection of drinking, ground, and surface waters of the state for present and future generations.

[Biosolids Program](#)

The treatment of municipal wastewater generates a residue called biosolids. Biosolids may be incinerated or taken to a landfill. However, biosolids contain nutrients and have a beneficial use as fertilizer. The Biosolids Program regulates the land application of biosolids to assure that pollutants in the biosolids do not create a threat to public health or the environment.

[Drinking Water Protection Program](#)

The *Drinking Water Protection Program* regulates public water supplies in the state to meet state and federal drinking water standards. These public systems consist of community (residential) and noncommunity (nonresidential; i.e., schools and restaurants) water supplies. This program regulates construction, operation, and maintenance of public water supplies. The *Well Construction Program* implements a statewide water well construction code and registers contractors who install water well systems for homes, farms, industries, schools, communities, and other public water supplies. The *Source Water Protection Program* provides guidance for community water supplies to help assess and prevent surface and groundwater contamination of public water supplies. Where groundwater contamination is found at levels posing a public health concern, the *Groundwater Contamination Investigation Program* responds by securing alternate sources of drinking water. The *Groundwater Dispute Resolution Program* helps resolve complaints involving impacts from high capacity wells, and the *Water Withdrawal and Use Program* regulates large quantity water users through reporting and permit requirements.

[Environmental Assessment Program](#)

The bureau monitors the water quality of Michigan surface waters through activities that include measuring the chemical character of water, sediments, and fish/wildlife tissues. The health and condition of aquatic communities and physical habitat are also assessed. Bureau monitoring activities are planned and conducted in partnership with outside organizations, including the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) citizen volunteers. Water quality data collected by the bureau and its partners are used to: assess the condition of individual waters of the state and determine whether standards are being met, measure temporal and spatial water quality trends, support and evaluate the effectiveness of the DEQ's water protection programs, and detect new and emerging water quality problems.

Environmental Health Programs

Working closely with local health departments, the bureau strives to protect the public health and environment through administration of regulatory programs dealing with [campgrounds](#) and [public swimming pools](#). The bureau also administers programs to assure that suitable site conditions are present for proposed [residential or commercial developments](#) dependent on individual on-site sewage systems and wells and regulates the proper collection and disposal of wastes by [septic tank pumpers](#).

Water and Wastewater Systems Design Program

Communities planning to construct new or expand existing wastewater and water treatment facilities first must obtain a construction permit from the bureau. Plans to construct new or to modify existing facilities are reviewed and approved by staff engineers and sanitarians. In addition, preliminary subdivision plats or condominium proposals are evaluated for suitability of on-site drinking water supply and sewage disposal. This program benefits the public by assuring that public dollars are well spent and public health and the environment are protected.

DEQ Internet Home Page:
www.michigan.gov/deqwwater
Environmental Assistance
Center:
800-662-9278
Pollution Emergencies:
800-292-4706

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[Industrial Pretreatment Program](#)

The bureau regulates industrial wastewater discharges to municipal wastewater treatment plants. Uncontrolled industrial wastes can disrupt the treatment process, pass through the plant to the receiving water, contaminate the biosolids, or create hazardous working conditions at the treatment plants.

Discharge Permit Program

The bureau administers permit programs for discharges to waters of the state. Discharges to state surface waters from municipal, industrial, and commercial facilities must be authorized by permit under the [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\)](#). The NPDES is a federal permit system that regulates discharges to surface waters; it has been delegated to Michigan. The NPDES permit program includes the [Storm Water Program](#), which regulates surface water discharges from large urban areas, some industries, and construction sites. The [Groundwater Discharge Permit Program](#) authorizes discharges to groundwater with state permits, self-certifications, and exemptions. Permits contain limits on the amount of various pollutants that can be discharged and establish other conditions. The permits are valid for no more than five years, after which they must be renewed. The discharge permit program is central to maintaining and protecting the quality of our water resources. A primary benefit of this permit program is to protect waters of the state for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

[Nonpoint Source Control Program](#)

The Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program addresses pollution from diffuse or “nonpoint” sources such as runoff from agricultural and urban areas during storm events. Pollutants from nonpoint sources remain among the most significant problems degrading or threatening the water quality of Michigan's lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. The program uses a variety of tools including technical assistance to local units of government and others; working in partnership with other agencies, programs, and organizations; enforcement of water quality standards and regulations; grants and loans to local governments and nonprofit organizations; and education and outreach activities.

[Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program](#)

Local units of government administer soil erosion control programs with oversight by the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program of the bureau. Bureau staff conduct training workshops for other state and local enforcing agencies. Program staff also perform audits of these agencies and make recommendations on how to improve their soil erosion control programs. Soil erosion and sedimentation of streams is a significant water quality problem in Michigan.

[Water Quality Standards Program](#)

Water quality standards are developed for the protection of human health, aquatic life, and wildlife, and for recreational, industrial, agricultural, and navigational uses of Michigan's surface waters. These values serve as goals for water quality and are used to develop water quality-based effluent limits for NPDES permits.

Other Water Bureau Programs

Fourteen Great Lake areas in Michigan have been identified as Areas of Concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the United States and Canada. In the [Great Lakes Program](#), the bureau participates in the development of Remedial Action Plans for these areas. The bureau also participates in a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency effort to develop protection plans for the Great Lakes called Lakewide Management Plans.

The [Homeland Security Program](#) addresses terrorism/security issues and related funding for water and wastewater facilities. It also coordinates review of facility spill plans and coordinates the bureau's policy and procedures related to emergency response.

The [Inland Lakes Management Program](#) provides technical assistance on how to protect and manage inland lakes and their watersheds. Information is available on the general condition of hundreds of lakes across the state. This program also regulates the use of substances for the treatment of swimmer's itch, nuisance aquatic plants, and algae.