



Overview of the Dewatering General Permit Program April 2020

On March 31, 2020, the Water Quality Control Division (division) of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment issued five new general permits for discharges from construction dewatering, groundwater remediation, and well development and pumping test activities to state waters. This document provides an overview of the new general permits, and guidance to assist facility owners and operators in selecting and applying for the right permit coverage to meet their project needs. This document also addresses frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help new and existing permittees understand their discharge permit requirements as the division transitions to the new general permit program. For additional information on the dewatering permit program and for links to all the general permit documents, visit the division's Dewatering General Permit Program webpage.

This document is intended as guidance. This document does not supersede or replace any applicable regulatory or permit requirements. The division encourages permittees to communicate directly with the division with any questions regarding applicability of the criteria provided in this document.

[Overview of Dewatering General Permits:](#)

The following five new general permits are described below:

- COG080000 - Discharges from Short-term (< 2 years) Construction Dewatering Activities
- COG317000 - Discharges from Short-term (< 2 years) Remediation Activities
- COG318000 - Discharges from Long-term (≥ 2 years) Remediation Activities
- COG603000 - Discharges from Subterranean Dewatering Activities
- COG608000 - Discharge to Surface Water from Well Development and Pump Testing Activities

➤ [COG080000 - Discharges from Short-term \(< 2 years\) Construction Dewatering Activities](#)

General permit COG080000 covers short-term (less than two year) discharges of source water that comes in contact with construction activities. Source water can include groundwater, surface water, and/or stormwater commingled with groundwater or surface water. The permit only covers situations where the source water is not expected to be contaminated. This means that the site is not located in an industrial area or near known sources of groundwater contamination and/or source water data collected at the site do not show exceedances of applicable water quality standards. These discharges are typically controlled with the use of control measures that filter or settle out sediment.

General Permit COG080000 becomes effective on June 1, 2020. After that date, all new short-term construction dewatering discharges will be covered under COG080000 as applicable. Existing dischargers that are already authorized to discharge under the previous construction dewatering general permit (COG070000) will be allowed to complete their projects under that administratively extended general permit over the next two years.

➤ [COG317000 - Discharges from Short-term \(< 2 years\) Remediation Activities](#)

General permit COG317000 covers short-term (less than two year) discharges of source water from remediation activities, which can include construction dewatering, volunteer cleanup, and other types of short-term dewatering activities. Source water can include groundwater, surface water, and/or



stormwater commingled with groundwater or surface water. This permit is different from COG080000 because it covers the discharge of source water that is expected to be contaminated based on the site location or a review of source water data collected the site. These discharges typically require the use of biological, chemical, or physical treatment technologies to meet water quality based permit limits.

General Permit COG317000 becomes effective on June 1, 2020. After that date, all new short-term remediation activity discharges will be covered under COG317000 as applicable. Existing short-term dischargers that are already authorized to discharge under a previous remediation general permit (COG315000 or COG316000) will be allowed to complete their projects under that administratively extended general permit over the next two years.

➤ **COG318000 - Discharges from Long-term (≥ 2 years) Remediation Activities**

General permit COG318000 covers long-term (two years or more) discharges of source water from remediation activities, which can include foundation dewatering, volunteer cleanup, and other types of long-term dewatering activities. Source water can include groundwater, surface water, and/or stormwater commingled with groundwater or surface water. Similar to COG317000, this permit covers the discharge of source water that is expected to be contaminated based on the site location or a review of source water data collected the site. These discharges typically require the use of biological, chemical, or physical treatment technologies to meet water quality based permit limits. Long-term discharges from remediation activities are covered under a separate general permit because these discharges are expected to have a greater impact on water quality and therefore require more stringent permit terms and conditions.

General Permit COG318000 becomes effective on June 1, 2020. After that date, all new long-term remediation activity discharges will be covered under COG318000 as applicable. Existing long-term dischargers that are already authorized to discharge under a previous remediation general permit (COG315000 or COG316000) will be re-issued permit coverage under General Permit COG318000 as applicable. The process of moving permittees from coverage under COG315000 to COG318000 will take time. The division will notify permittees as their long-term permits (≥2 years) are processed for renewed coverage.

➤ **COG603000 - Discharges from Subterranean Dewatering Activities - Delayed Effective Date**

General Permit COG603000 covers discharges of source water from subterranean dewatering (e.g., foundation dewatering) activities. Subterranean dewatering discharges are typically long-term, although short-term discharges are also eligible for coverage under the general permit. Source water can include groundwater, surface water, and/or stormwater commingled with groundwater or surface water. The permit only covers situations where the source water is not expected to be contaminated. This means that the site is not located in an industrial area or near known sources of groundwater contamination and/or source water data collected at the site do not show exceedances of applicable water quality standards. These discharges are typically controlled through the use of filter bags or settling basins to remove sediment.

General Permit COG603000 is a renewal of the previous permit with the same permit number, and has a two-year delayed effective date of June 1, 2022. Over this two-year period, the division will review discharges authorized under COG603000, require the submission of analytical source water data, and determine which discharges can remain under the permit and which discharges must be moved to other general permits (e.g., COG318000, COG608000). The process of moving permittees from coverage under COG603000 to other permits will take time. The division will notify permittees as their permits are



processed for renewed coverage. Permittees that are eligible to remain under COG603000 should expect no change in permit coverage.

➤ **COG608000 - Discharge to Surface Water from Well Development and Pump Testing Activities**

General permit COG608000 covers discharges of source water from well development and pumping test activities for non-dewatering wells to surface waters of the state. Source water can include groundwater or groundwater commingled with surface water and/or stormwater. This permit does not cover discharges from construction dewatering, groundwater remediation, and permanent dewatering wells because other general permits are available and are more appropriate for those discharges. This permit does not cover discharges to land because those discharges are covered under the authority of the State Engineer of the Department of Natural Resources and/or the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division (HMWMD) of the Department of Public Health and Environment.

General Permit COG608000 becomes effective on June 1, 2020. After that date, all new well development and pump testing discharges to surface water will be covered under COG608000 as applicable. Existing dischargers that are already authorized to discharge under the previous well development general permit (COG603000) will be allowed to complete their projects under that administratively extended general permit over the next two years.

[How to Apply for Permit Coverage](#)

All requests for dewatering permit actions, such as new applications, modifications, and transfers, are processed through the Colorado Environmental Online Services (CEOS) portal. The CEOS Login and several helpful CEOS guides are available through the Dewatering General Permit Program webpage. Using CEOS involves setting-up an online account and tracking your permit status on a personalized permits dashboard.

All permit application fees will be invoiced by the division subsequent to receipt of the permit application.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Q. What if I submit a new permit application or a request for modification to an existing permit certification between April 1, 2020 and June 1, 2020?

A. Between these dates, new short-term and long-term permit applications, as well as modifications, will be processed under the administratively extended general permits COG080000, COG315000, COG316000, and COG603000, as applicable.

Q. What if I submit a new permit application or a request for modification to an existing permit certification after June 1, 2020?

A. After June 1, 2020, new applications will not be accepted under general permits COG080000 and COG315000. Modifications may be processed under the administratively extended general permits COG080000, COG315000, COG316000, and COG603000, as applicable.



Q. I have a current permit certification, what do I need to do?

A. All permittees must comply with their current general permit coverage. Additional actions vary by permit type:

- Permittees with coverage for short-term discharges under COG070000, COG315000, or COG316000 must complete their dewatering activities and apply for permit termination or obtain alternate permit coverage by May 1, 2022.
- Permittees with coverage for long-term discharges under COG315000 or COG316000 will be automatically transferred to a new permit (e.g., COG318000) as applicable.*
- Permittees with coverage for long-term discharges under COG603000 will be required to submit a source water sample. Source water data is not required until it is requested. Based on review of the source water data, coverage may be renewed under COG603000, or automatically transferred to a new permit (e.g., COG318000).*
- Permittees with coverage for well development or pump testing discharges under COG603000 will be automatically transferred to a new permit (e.g., COG608000).*

* The process of renewing permit coverage will take some time. Permittees must comply with their current permit until new permit coverage is effective.

Q. What is CEOS?

A. CEOS is the Colorado Environmental Online Services electronic platform for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The web based platform allows permittees to interact with department environmental programs via a single and secure web portal. Users can perform a number of activities such as applying and paying for required permits, uploading documents such as site plans and also updating and modifying information on file. In turn, the department is able to process requests from permittees and provide appropriate permits back in the same portal. Permittees must use CEOS for permit actions, such as applying for permit coverage, changing the site map or changing contacts.

Q. What is contaminated source water?

A. For the purposes of the general permits, “contaminated” means that your source water contains constituents at concentrations above applicable water quality standards or screening criteria. This may include both anthropogenic and potentially naturally-occurring constituents.

Q. How do I know if the source water at my site is contaminated?

A. The division’s *Guidance for Completing a Dewatering Permit Application* (available on the Dewatering Permit Program webpage) provides step-by-step guidance and resources for reviewing your site for nearby sources of groundwater contamination and collecting source water data (if required) to demonstrate whether your source water is contaminated.

In general, the division’s process for determining whether your source water is “contaminated” varies based on your site location and project duration. For some dewatering activities, the division will require analytical source water data to make this determination. Specifically, the division will require source water data with



permit applications for all short-term dewatering discharges located in commercial/industrial areas and for all long-term dewatering discharges. For other dewatering activities, such as short-term projects located in rural areas, a due-diligence step conducted by the permit applicant may be sufficient to demonstrate that the site is not located near known sources of groundwater contamination and that the dewatering source water is not likely to contain or draw in contaminants.