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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

LOW RISK DISCHARGE GUIDANCE:

DISCHARGES OF POTABLE WATER

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This discharge guidance has been developed in accordance with WQP-27, Low Risk Discharges. The Division has previously had coverage for some discharges of potable water under the Treated Water Distribution Permit (COG380000), however, this permit is only available to entities that produce, store and distribute potable water supplies. The Division does not intend to renew the Treated Water Distribution Permit as all authorized discharges under this permit are potable water related. Other discharges of potable water have been covered under the Minimum Industrial Discharge Permit (COG600000); however, this permit is in process of being dismantled as it has evolved into covering numerous facility and discharge types.

When the provisions of this guidance are met, the Division will not actively pursue permitting or enforcement for the discharge of potable water, unless on a case-by-case basis the Division finds that a discharge has resulted in an adverse impact to the quality of any state waters receiving the discharge.

Discharges of potable water are a type of industrial activity with short term infrequent discharges that with proper management are not expected to contain pollutants in concentrations that are toxic or in concentrations that would cause or contribute to a violation of a water quality standard. The typical pollutant of concern is total residual chlorine, however, depending on how the discharge occurs, total suspended solids and oil and grease may become pollutants of concern. These pollutants can be handled using dechlorination techniques, filters, oil booms, and other best management practices (BMPs).

There are a large number of discharges of potable water, some of which are covered under the previously mentioned General Permits. Numerous discharges occur without permit coverage. These types of discharges may occur at all times of the year, and require a resource intensive effort to permit, without resulting in a clear general benefit to environmental quality.

The following conditions must be followed by anyone discharging potable water:

- The discharge of cleaning materials or chemicals, including dyes, is strictly prohibited, and should be sent to the sanitary sewer, with permission of the local wastewater treatment facility, or otherwise collected and disposed of.

- The potable water shall **not** be used in any additional process. Processes include, but are not limited to, any type of washing, heat exchange, manufacturing, and hydrostatic testing of pipelines not associated with treated water distribution systems.
- The discharge shall be from a potable water distribution system, tank or storage that has been maintained for potable water distribution use. Discharges from a distribution system, tank or storage that is used for conveyance or storage of materials other than potable water is not authorized under this policy.
- The discharge shall not cause erosion of a land surface.
- The discharge shall not contain solid materials in concentrations that can settle to form bottom deposits detrimental to the beneficial uses of the state waters or form floating debris, scum, or other surface materials sufficient to harm existing beneficial uses.
- All discharges must comply with the lawful requirements of federal agencies, municipalities, counties, drainage districts, ditch owners, and other local agencies regarding any discharges to storm drain systems, conveyances, ditches or other water courses under their jurisdiction.
 - The guidance included in this document in no way reduces the existing authority of the owner of a storm sewer, ditch owner, or other local agency, from prohibiting or placing additional conditions on the discharge.
- If the discharge is directly to a State surface water (any stream, creek, gully, whether dry or flowing), it must not contain any residual chlorine. The operator is responsible for determining what is necessary for removing chlorine from the discharge. If the discharge is to a ditch, chlorine content may be limited by the owner of the ditch. However, if the ditch returns flow to classified state waters, it must not contain any residual chlorine at the point where it discharges to the classified state water. .

BMPs should be implemented as necessary to meet the conditions above, by anyone discharging potable water. These BMPs have been developed by the Division to help ensure that the discharge will not negatively affect water quality.

- For discharge to the ground, the water should not cause any toxicity to vegetation. When discharging, allow the water to drain slowly so that it soaks into the ground as much as possible.
- If discharge is to the sanitary sewer, contact the local wastewater treatment facility prior to discharge. System owners may grant blanket authorization to discharge to their systems. This must be done to ensure that the facility is able to accept the discharge. Not all facilities are able to accept such discharges. Note that additional restrictions or local guidelines may apply.
- Removal of any residual chlorine must be done for any direct discharge to state surface waters, or for any discharge to a storm sewer or conveyance where the chlorine will not dissipate prior to reaching a state surface water. Dechlorination, if necessary, may be achieved by allowing water to stand uncovered until no chlorine is detected, or by dechlorination using a portable dechlorinator. Pay particular attention when handling super-chlorinated waters. A longer time is needed to dissipate chlorine from super-chlorinated waters.
- The discharge should be conducted to minimize the potential to pick up additional suspended solids. When possible, a best management practice, or combination of practices, for filtering or settling suspended solids and other debris, or a combination of practices, should be used to remove suspended solids or other debris. Examples of suspended solid removal practices include, but are not limited to check dams, filter bags, and inlet protection. These devices should be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers specifications.

- The discharge should be conducted to minimize the potential that it will not pick up any oil and grease. When possible, an absorbent oil pad, boom or similar device should be used to eliminate oil from the discharge.

Contact Information:

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