

GROUNDWATER GENERAL PERMIT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions for obtaining coverage under the **Groundwater General Permit (Order R2-2025-0029, NPDES Permit CAG912002)**, which covers discharges of groundwater to surface waters. The Groundwater General Permit can be found on our [General Permits webpage](#).

COVERAGE

Q.1. What does the Groundwater General Permit cover?

A.1. The Groundwater General Permit covers discharges of groundwater originating from aquifer reclamation programs, structural dewatering operations (including construction dewatering activities), or active or closed cleanup sites, to surface waters. These discharges are grouped into four classes according to the type of discharge and level of treatment, as follows:

- **Class 1** groundwater discharges originate from wells in aquifer reclamation programs.
- **Class 2** groundwater discharges consist of reverse osmosis concentrate originating from wells in aquifer reclamation programs.
- **Class 3** groundwater discharges originate from structural dewatering activities where flows are 10,000 gallons per day or greater and require minimal or no treatment because contamination by priority pollutants is not present. This class includes discharges from construction projects that disturb less than 1 acre of soil and do not have priority pollutant contamination. For construction projects that disturb one or more acres of soil and do not have priority pollutant contamination, see the [Construction Stormwater General Permit](#). For discharges that are less than 10,000 gallons per day and do not have priority pollutant contamination, see the [Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit](#).
- **Class 4** groundwater discharges largely originate from construction dewatering activities or active or closed cleanup sites where contamination consists of volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, fuel-related compounds, and PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances) at detectable concentrations, or metals at concentrations higher than the effluent limitations listed in Table 4 of the permit.

Q.2. Does the Groundwater General Permit require a minimum or maximum groundwater discharge volume to enroll?

A.2. The Groundwater General Permit requires Class 3 discharges to be at least 10,000 gallons per day to enroll. For all other discharge classes (i.e., Classes 1, 2, and 4), there is no minimum or maximum discharge volume required to enroll.

Q.3. I need to discharge groundwater to the storm drain or surface water for my construction dewatering project. Do I need an NPDES permit?

A.3. Yes, you need an NPDES permit. If the discharge corresponds to one of the discharge classes described above, you are required to obtain coverage under this permit. If the discharge does not qualify for coverage under this permit and is associated with a construction project, you may be able to enroll under the [Construction Stormwater General Permit](#) instead.

Q.4. Do I need an NPDES permit from the Water Board to discharge groundwater to the sanitary sewer?

A.4. No. This permit covers direct or indirect (e.g., via storm drain systems) groundwater discharges to surface waters. Nevertheless, you should contact the sanitary sewer agency (e.g., the city or district responsible for sanitary sewer collection and treatment) to comply with their specific requirements. The Water Board asks permit applicants to verify that they cannot discharge to a sanitary sewer before enrolling under the Groundwater General Permit.

Q.5. I am conducting a groundwater remediation project that includes groundwater injection. Is this discharge covered by the Groundwater General Permit?

A.5. No. This permit covers direct or indirect (e.g., via storm drain systems) groundwater discharges to surface waters. Please contact your state or local environmental regulator for applicable requirements. Staff at the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board are available for further assistance (see our [Programs](#) for the corresponding contact persons).

ENROLLMENT

Q.1. What do I need to do to enroll under the Groundwater General Permit?

A.1. You need to submit a complete application and application fee to the Water Board. The full application package consists of three components: (1) a Notice of Intent (NOI) form, (2) an Engineering Certification Report, and (3) an application fee. Instructions to complete the NOI and Engineering Report can be found in Attachment B of the Groundwater General Permit. A Word version of the NOI form can be accessed directly from our [General Permits webpage](#). For information on the application fee, see the Fees section of this document.

Q.2. How long does the Water Board take to review an application and issue an Authorization to Discharge under the Groundwater General Permit?

A.2. Typically, if the application is complete and the application fee is paid, we issue the Authorization to Discharge within 30 calendar days.

Q.3. Can I still enroll the Groundwater General Permit after its expiration date?

A.3. Yes, you can still enroll under the “expired” permit if it has not yet been reissued. NPDES permits are updated and reissued roughly every five years.

Q.4. I have two or more sites that need dewatering simultaneously. Can I obtain permit coverage for more than one site with just one application?

A.4. You may cover the dewatering discharges for more than one site with one application if the sites are adjacent to each other. In that case, only one application fee is required. Otherwise, you must submit a separate application and application fee for each site.

Q.5. What testing is required to apply under the Groundwater General Permit?

A.5. Section 8.1 of the Notice of Intent lists the pollutants required to be analyzed as part of the permit application process. Analytical test methods can be found on Attachment E Table E-3 of the Groundwater General Permit or under [40 CFR part 136.3](#). The number of samples to take is up to the applicant, but the samples must be representative of the groundwater intended to be treated and discharged.

Q.6. What are the Municipal Supply Pollutants listed in Attachment B - Notice of Intent Form section 8.1 and tables E-2 and E-3 of the Groundwater General Permit?

A.6. As shown in their corresponding table footnotes, Municipal Supply Pollutants are pollutants with Maximum Contaminant Levels (except radionuclides) found in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, specifically in [Table 64431-A](#) (Inorganic Chemicals) of section 64431, [Table 64433.2-A](#) (Fluoride) of section 64433.2, and [Table 64444-A](#) (Organic Chemicals) of section 64444. Some of these pollutants are already listed individually in section 8.1 of the Notice of Intent Form and Tables E-2 and E-3 of the Groundwater General Permit (Priority Pollutants in Tables E-2 and E-3 also include some Municipal Supply Pollutants). Municipal Supply Pollutants not already listed in the Notice of Intent Form and Tables E-2 and E-3 of the Groundwater General Permit are as follows:

Aluminum	Styrene	Dibromochloropropane	Methoxychlor
Barium	Trichlorofluoromethane	2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid	Molinate
Chromium (total)	1,1,2-Trichloro-1,2,2-Trifluoroethane	Di(2-ethylhexyl)adipate	Oxamyl
Fluoride	Xylenes	Dinoseb	Picloram
Nitrate (as nitrogen)	Alachlor	Diquat	Simazine
Nitrite (as nitrogen)	Atrazine	Endothal	Thiobencarb
Nitrate+Nitrite (sum as Nitrogen)	Bentazon	Ethylene Dibromide	1,2,3-Trichloropropane
Perchlorate	Carbofuran	Glyphosate	2,4,5-TP Silvex
cis-1,2-dichloroethylene	Dalapon	Lindane	

FEES

Q.1. How much does it cost to enroll in the Groundwater General Permit?

A.1. The Groundwater General Permit requires application and annual permit coverage fees. The fee depends on the type of class of discharge covered by this permit. The application and annual fees for these classes are updated periodically and can be found in the latest [Water Quality Fee Schedule](#), Water Code section 2200(b)(10). For Classes 1 through 3, refer to the fees for Category 3 discharges. For Class 4 discharges, refer to the fee for Category 1 discharges.

Q.2. I am about to enroll under the Groundwater General Permit. What does the application fee payment cover?

A.2. The application fee pays for the review of the application and permit coverage for the current fiscal year. The State Water Resources Control Board prorates application payments based on the date of the Authorization to Discharge letter confirming coverage under the permit. The remainder of the fee is applied toward the next annual fee invoice if the discharge is still enrolled at the time of the invoice issuance.

Q.3. I am a current permit enrollee. When are annual fee invoices issued and what is their coverage period?

A.3. The State Water Resources Control Board issues annual fee invoices each year (approximately every November or December) for the current fiscal year. The coverage period starts on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year.

Q.4. Can I get partial refund on my last annual fee payment since I'm ending permit coverage before the end of the fiscal year?

A.4. No. The State Water Resources Control Board does not refund any portion of the final annual fee.

PERMIT COVERAGE TERMINATION

Q.1. What do I need to do to terminate permit coverage for my discharge?

A.1. You need to complete Attachment C (Notice of Termination) of the Groundwater General Permit and submit it to the Water Board. Permit coverage ends on the date you submit the Notice of Termination. The Water Board will not send a formal response. A Word version of the Notice of Termination form can be accessed from our [General Permits webpage](#).

Q.2. I'm ending permit coverage before the next reporting period ends or the next monitoring report is due. Am I required to submit anything other than a Notice of Termination?

A.2. Yes, the Discharger must still submit semi-annual self-monitoring reports (Attachment E section 6.2.2.1), annual reports (Attachment E section 6.2.2.2), and a PFAS Monitoring Summary Report, if applicable (see Attachment E section 6.4). Submittal of these monitoring reports is required to report the data and information collected between the end of the last reporting period and the date permit coverage ends.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q.1. What should I do if there are staff or facility changes at my facility that make the previously approved Notice of Intent (NOI) information no longer valid?

A.1. You must submit a revised NOI to the Water Board. You must also submit a revised NOI if there are any changes described in section 6.3.2.3 of the Groundwater General Permit (page 10), or if the NOI signatory, Duly Authorized Representative, Design Professional Engineer, Maintenance & Operation Professional Engineer, or Consultancy are no longer current. Keeping

this information up to date is critical for compliance with permit reporting requirements and facilitates communication between you and Water Board staff. There are no fees associated with NOI changes.

Q.2. I have coverage through the Groundwater General Permit, but my facility has not discharged. Do I still need to submit reports?

A.2. Yes. Attachment E section 6.2.2 of the Groundwater General Permit (page E-12) requires that an enrollee still submit semi-annual self-monitoring reports to report the status of its discharge even if it has not discharged for an entire reporting period.

Q.3. I have coverage through the Groundwater General Permit, but I need to discharge stormwater that accumulated at my excavation after a storm event. Can I discharge it?

A.3. Dischargers covered by the Groundwater General Permit can discharge stormwater if it is commingled with groundwater. The Groundwater General Permit does not cover stormwater discharges not commingled with groundwater per section 1.2.2 (page 3). For stormwater discharges not covered under the Groundwater General Permit, see our [Stormwater Program webpage](#) for the corresponding contact persons.

Q.4. Attachment E Table E-3 suggests the use of EPA method 8270 to analyze several semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). However, method detection limits for some SVOCs are greater than corresponding effluent limits on Table 2. What other analytical methods can I use? Are there permit compliance concerns if I use analytical methods with method detection limits greater than effluent limits?

A.4. Selected ion monitoring (SIM) mode can be applied in EPA method 8270 to target specific SVOCs and achieve lower method detection limits. However, if this technique is insufficient, the Discharger can work with its analytical laboratory to see whether other analytical methods, such as those specified in 40 C.F.R. part 136, are more sensitive. At any case, any equivalent test method selected must be more sensitive than those specified in 40 C.F.R. part 136 and the permit.

For compliance purposes, as described in Attachment E section 6.2.5., the Discharger shall be deemed out of compliance with effluent limitations if the concentration of the pollutant in the monitoring sample is greater than the effluent limitation and greater or equal to the reporting limit. This means that analytical test methods with method detection limits greater than effluent limits whose results are non-detect or detected but not quantified (e.g. J-flagged) will not be considered out of compliance.

Q.5. Can I cease monitoring the parameters listed on Attachment E Table E-3 if they are not detected in the influent of the treatment system?

A.5. Yes; Attachment E Table E-3 and Footnote 4 show which and how parameters can be removed from routine monitoring if they are not detected in the influent.

For a Discharger enrolled as of the effective date of this permit (July 1, 2026), it can use historical monitoring influent data to determine whether it can cease routine monitoring. At least the last three consecutive influent test results must be used to determine whether routine monitoring can cease. If the Discharger does not have sufficient influent monitoring data, it must

collect at least three consecutive influent monitoring results to make a determination. These results must be submitted with its self-monitoring report due February 15, 2027.

For a Discharger enrolled after the effective date of this permit, it must use monitoring data collected during the application process and startup phase to determine whether it can cease routine monitoring. At least the last three consecutive influent or untreated groundwater test results must be used to determine whether routine monitoring can cease. If the Discharger does not have sufficient influent or untreated groundwater monitoring data, it must collect at least three consecutive influent or untreated groundwater monitoring results to make a determination. These results must be submitted with the self-monitoring report due soonest to its third set of results.