

M...S...What?

Many cities have an MS4 program, but your question may be: What is an MS4? A municipal separate storm sewer system, or an MS4, is a conveyance or system of conveyances. These conveyance systems are owned by a state, city, town, village or other public entity that collects storm water and discharges the storm water to waters of the United States.

On November 16, 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgated regulations, under the Water Quality Act of 1987, setting forth application requirements for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permits.

In 1999, EPA promulgated regulations establishing Phase II of the NPDES storm water program. The Phase II program extends coverage of the NPDES storm water program to regulated “small” MS4s. A regulated “small” MS4 is located within an “urbanized area” as defined by the Census Bureau or as designated by the NPDES permitting authority.

Through an MS4 permit a public entity is charged with the responsibility of putting together a comprehensive program that educates and takes action to eliminate pollution to the waters of the United States. This comprehensive program’s elements or minimum control measures are listed below.

MS4 Minimum Control Measures:

- **Public Education and Outreach** The entity must perform educational outreach for the community regarding the harmful impacts of polluted storm water runoff.
- **Public Participation/Involvement** The entity must encourage avenues for citizen involvement to reduce harmful impacts of polluted storm water runoff.
- **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination** The entity must implement a plan to detect and eliminate any non-storm water discharges to the MS4 and create a system map showing outfall locations.
- **Construction Site Runoff Control** The entity must implement and enforce an erosion and sediment control program for construction activities.
- **Post-Construction Runoff Control** The entity must implement and enforce a program to address discharges of post-construction storm water runoff from new development and redevelopment areas.
- **Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping** The entity must implement a program to reduce pollutant runoff from municipal operations and properly and perform staff pollution prevention training.

CDG Engineers and Associates, Inc. is a diversified professional services firm specializing in environmental remediation, solid waste and environmental consulting as well as civil, utility, transportation and geotechnical engineering that has been contracted to help the City of Smiths Station with the future development of their MS4 program. For more information about CDG Engineers and Associates, Inc. please visit their website at www.cdge.com.

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