

# DSW

# COVID-19 Update

*Webinar*  
*April 17, 2020*

**Division of Surface Water**



# Overview

- COVID-19 Information
- Regulatory Flexibility
- Personal Protection/Supplies
- Agency Operations
- Contacts
- Outreach
- Q&A



# Coronavirus.ohio.gov

Language Translation Instructions An Official Site of [Ohio.gov](#)

**Ohio** Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Families and Individuals Healthcare Providers and Local Health Districts Employers and Employees

### Together Ohio

We are all in this together, Ohio. If you are interested in helping your fellow Ohioans, please email [together@governor.ohio.gov](mailto:together@governor.ohio.gov) with your name, contact information, and how you are interested in helping.

[Read More](#)

**!** **Questions about COVID-19**  
Ohio Department of Health call center is ready to answer your questions about COVID-19

**📞** **Call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH**  
The Call Center is staffed from 9 a.m to 8 p.m each day, including weekends.

<b>6,881</b> Confirmed Cases	<b>94</b> CDC Expanded Case Definition (Probable)	<b>6,975</b> Total Cases	<b>2,033</b> Number of Hospitalizations in Ohio
<b>268</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>613</b>

# <https://epa.ohio.gov/covid19>



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! As a precautionary response to COVID-19, Ohio EPA is currently operating with most staff working remotely. If you are working with our staff on a current project and you know the name of the employee you are working with, email them at [firstname.lastname@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@epa.ohio.gov) or call them directly. The Agency website has contact information for every district, division, and office. In order to reach us, please contact Ohio EPA's main phone line at (614) 644-3020 or the main line for the division or office you are trying to reach.

After March 23, our district offices and Central Office will be temporarily closed and will have increasingly limited ability to receive deliveries, plans, etc. All entities are encouraged to submit plans, permit applications, etc., electronically where there are existing avenues to do so, such as the [eBusiness Center \(eBiz\)](#). Please refer to the list of available services on the [main eBiz webpage](#). We encourage you to make use of all that apply, even if you have not used eBiz in the past. Plans under 25 MB can be emailed. For large plans over 25 MB, entities should work with the reviewer/division to upload via LiquidFiles. Directions for submitting docs via LiquidFiles is available on [YouTube](#). We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you in advance for your understanding.

To report a spill or environmental emergency, contact the spill hotline (800) 282-9378 or (614) 224-0946.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, Questions, and Guidance

With the onset of the coronavirus (COVID 19) and the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency in Ohio, Ohio EPA is aware that regulated entities may be impacted from a reduced workforce necessary to maintain normal operations at some facilities.

All regulated entities remain obligated to take all available actions necessary to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and permit requirements to protect the health and safety of Ohioans and the environment. However, in the instance where regulated entities will have an unavoidable noncompliance situation, directly due to impact from the coronavirus, a form has been created by Ohio EPA to accept requests for the Director of Ohio EPA to consider providing regulatory flexibility, where possible, to assist entities in alternative approaches to maintaining compliance, such as extending reporting deadlines, consideration of waiving late fees and exercising enforcement discretion.

Regulated entities should complete the request form with specific information related to enforcement discretion. Form submittals will be monitored daily and Ohio EPA will work diligently to expeditiously review and respond to incoming requests from regulated entities. The following information is needed to complete the form:

- The specific regulatory or permit requirement which cannot be complied with
- A concise statement describing the circumstances preventing compliance
- The anticipated duration of time that the noncompliance will persist
- The mitigative measures that will be taken to protect public health and the environment during the need for enforcement discretion
- A central point of contact for the regulated entity, including an email address and phone number
- Where alternative compliance options are authorized by Ohio EPA, regulated entities must maintain records adequate to document activities related to the noncompliance and details of the regulated entity's best efforts to comply

### OHIO EPA QUICK LINKS

The following links will take you to questions, information, and resources from Ohio EPA divisions for the COVID-19 response.

- ▶ [March 31, 2020 Public Water System Emergency Order](#)
- ▶ [Division of Drinking and Ground Waters](#)
- ▶ [Division of Materials and Waste Management](#)
- ▶ [Division of Surface Water](#)

### STATE QUICK LINKS

The following links are to statewide information and sites.

- ▶ [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#)

### FEDERAL QUICK LINKS

# <https://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/covid19>



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## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, Questions, and Guidance

Information regarding the Division of Surface Water's response and guidance to COVID-19.

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### Operations at Ohio Wastewater Treatment Systems during COVID-19 Pandemic

The operation of wastewater systems by trained operators to ensure Ohioans are provided with proper sewage treatment is a critical public health-related responsibility. Particularly during a declared statewide emergency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains critically important that certified wastewater operators continue performing their duties to make sure wastewater is being conveyed to the treatment plant and is properly treated.

Ohio EPA expects that all wastewater systems remain operational and adhere to critical compliance requirements that will ensure adequately treated wastewater. The Agency is working closely with these wastewater treatment entities to provide guidelines, information, and resources to assist them with continued operations, including appropriate staffing for their facilities.

General priority recommendations from Ohio EPA for operators and wastewater treatment systems:

- have backup staff identified to assist with plant operations in the event personnel become sick;
- perform solo compliance visits at plants and avoid contact through social distancing;
- stagger visits at plants during times when other individuals are not present (e.g., outside normal working hours for smaller treatment systems);
- ensure any contingency planning/measures in place are up to date and that these address items as appropriately certified professional backups, certified professional operators, and other personnel

aff-contacts | geable of the system; and

### Questions about Regulatory Flexibility?

Regulated entities should visit Ohio EPA's COVID-19 Hub for information about enforcement discretion and regulatory flexibility.

#### QUICK LINKS

- ▶ [Ohio EPA's COVID-19 Hub](#)
- ▶ [Ohio's COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- ▶ [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- ▶ [Water Environment Federation](#)
- ▶ [U.S. EPA list of registered antimicrobial products for use against COVID-19](#)

# <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

 An official website of the United States government.

 We've made some changes to [EPA.gov](#). If the information you are looking for is not here, you may be able to find it on the [EPA Web Archive](#) or the [January 19, 2017 Web Snapshot](#). [Close](#) ✕



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## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) will provide updated information as it becomes available, in addition to updated guidance. This website provides key EPA resources on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

**NEW** [Frequent Questions about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

### Information on Disinfectants



On January 29, 2020, EPA activated its [Emerging Viral Pathogens Guidance for Antimicrobial](#)

### Information on Drinking Water and Wastewater



EPA is providing information on drinking water and wastewater to provide clarity to the

#### Related Information for State, Local and Tribal Organizations

- [Coronavirus Resources for State, Local, and Tribal Agencies and Associations](#)
- [COVID-19 Enforcement and Compliance Resources](#)
- [Frequent Questions on Grant Issues in Response to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

# Regulatory COVID-19 Guidelines

- Goal: All wastewater systems remain operational and adhere to critical compliance requirements that ensure adequately treated wastewater
- During the State of Emergency an organization's required regulatory abilities may be limited
- Ohio EPA will be using regulatory flexibility and enforcement discretion for noncompliance associated with COVID-19

# Operations Staffing

- Essential Employees (Department of Homeland Security)
  - Designate staff and provide credentials
  - Identify outside essential suppliers and labs
- Contingency Planning
  - Backup operators
  - Stagger visits
  - Shelter in place
- Maintain minimum staffing: Oversight Priority
  1. Operator of Record (ORC)
  2. Other certified operators
  3. Individuals familiar with plant
  4. Individuals with plant access (remote assistance)
- Report staffing issues by calling Ohio EPA district offices
- Non-essential Small Systems (under Class II) not operating as a result of executive order may request seasonal staffing adjustment

# Discharge Monitoring (eDMR)

- Final Outfall Effluent sampling is highest priority
- Data Substitution Code “AH” (sampling not taken) may be used
  - Include comment “COVID-19 Pandemic”

# Permittee Regulatory Requirements

- Entity's regulatory capabilities maybe limited
  - Examples: pretreatment sampling or MS4 construction inspections
- Ohio EPA is not able to grant general waivers for regulatory requirements
- Entity may make a regulatory flexibility request for specific permit requirements

# Regulatory Flexibility Request

- [epa.state.oh.us/COVID19](http://epa.state.oh.us/COVID19)
- Complete request form (Survey Monkey):
  - Specific requirement not met
  - Statement of circumstances preventing compliance
  - Anticipated duration of non-compliance
  - Mitigative measures being taken
  - Central point of contact – email and phone



**COVID-19**  
Information



# Operator Assistance List

- Ohio EPA surveyed certified professional operators if able to assist other systems (in-person and/or remotely)
- The Agency created a list of potentially available professional operators
- Contact Ohio EPA operator certification unit if willing to be added
  - [opcert@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:opcert@epa.ohio.gov)
  - 1-866-411-OPCT(6728)

# Operator Testing and Renewals

- May 6, 2020 in-person exam postponed
  - All approved applicants have been emailed
  - Automatically scheduled for the new date once determined
  - Option to take the next available exam or November exam
- Currently there are no plans to extend the licensing renewals certifications past the end of the year

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Supplies

- Wastewater PPE (gloves, mask and hand sanitizer) are in limited supplies
  - Wastewater employees are considered Tier 2 essential workforce
  - Current PPE priorities are for Tier 1 staff (health care and first responders)
- Reports of chemical shortages around the country (O<sub>2</sub>, Cl<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>)
- All PPE and supplies issues should be coordinated with your county EMA
  - If experiencing issues, also notify your district office

# How to Reach Us

# Agency Operations

- Governor Order
  - Telecommute
- Electronic Submissions
  - Detail and General Plans, Applications, Reports and Forms, ORC and ePay
- Agency Involvement in Ohio EMA Response

# Permit to Install Plans

- New detail and general plans can be submitted to district supervisor
  - directly if less than 25 MB
  - or if >25 MB through [Liquid Files](https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/29/documents/ofa/LiquidFilesInstructions.pdf)  
<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/29/documents/ofa/LiquidFilesInstructions.pdf>
- Current plans under review: contact district supervisor or staff engineer for status updates

# Applications

- eBusiness:
  - STREAMS
    - General NPDES Permits - NOI/NOT
    - Individual NPDES
    - Indirect Dischargers
  - 401 Certification, Isolated Wetland Permit and Director's Authorizations

# Reports and Forms

- eBusiness - eDMR
- eBusiness - STREAMS
  - NPDES (noncompliance, biomonitoring, SSO annual report, emergency overflows)
  - Pretreatment (quarterly and annual reports)
  - Sludge Annual Report
  - MS4 Annual Report
- eBusiness - 401 Certification and Isolated Wetland Permit
- eBusiness – Certified Operator of Record and Minimum Staffing Reporting

# Wastewater Compliance Assistance Unit

- Three staff located in Central Office, Southeast District Office and Northwest District Office
  - Not conducting WWTP site visits but available by email or phone
  - Troubleshoot complex plant problems
  - Teach operators more effective methods of process control
- For assistance, please contact Ryan Laake at [ryan.laake@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:ryan.laake@epa.ohio.gov) or visit [www.epa.state.oh.us/default/CAU](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/default/CAU)

# Water Pollution Control Loan Fund and Water Supply Revolving Loan Account

- The two State Revolving Fund loan programs are continuing to issue loans for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects.
- Reviews are conducted by staff remotely.
- Normal procedures for the loan programs continue.
- We are expecting to issue the Program Management Plan for the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account on schedule (draft in mid-May, final prior to July 1).
- For assistance, please contact Jon Bernstein at [jonathan.bernstein@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:jonathan.bernstein@epa.ohio.gov)



# CDC Infrastructure Workers Guidance if COVID Exposure May Have Occurred

- **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure employee temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet distance and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean Workspaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>



# Success Stories

- Ohio EPA would like to show the public all the extraordinary measures our POTWs are taking to ensure public health and environmental safety.
- If you email Brian or Tiffani your plant's story (with pictures), we will highlight those through social media and press releases.
- [Tiffani.Kavalec@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Tiffani.Kavalec@epa.ohio.gov)
- [Brian.Hall@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Brian.Hall@epa.ohio.gov)

# Staying in Touch

- Bi-Weekly calls with OWEA small group
- Email blasts
- Frequent updates to website
- Regulatory flexibility portal
- Direct communication with DSW staff and management

# How can we be of further assistance?

- What do you need that you don't have?
  - Guidance
  - Technical Assistance
  - Equipment/Supplies
  - Other
- How frequently would you like to have these discussions?
- Anything else?



# THANKFUL

FOR PROFESSIONAL WATER AND  
WASTEWATER OPERATORS

THE UNSUNG HEROES PROTECTING  
THE ENVIRONMENT AND KEEPING  
YOUR WATER CLEAN AND SAFE 24/7!

#NOTALLHEROESWEARCAPES

