



General Permit No. 23-CT Fact Sheet

General Permit for the Discharge of Compost Toilet Wastewater

Summary of significant Changes From the 18-CT

1. Condition I.D - Changed section from 'Individual Permit Required' to 'Alternative Permit Coverage' and added conditions in which alternative permit coverage may be obtained or required.
2. Condition II.A.1.a - Added EJ score and calculated nutrient uptake requirement to NOI.
3. Condition II.B - Added options for alternative registration
4. Condition II.E - Added deadlines for Coverage and information about the Declaration of Intent
5. Condition II.I - Added section for changes in permit coverage.
6. Condition II.K - Added section for denial of authorization.
7. Condition III.A.3 - Updated prohibition against winter land application.
8. Condition III.A.6.a - Updated application rates to require calculation for nutrient management.
9. Condition V. - Updated standard permit conditions.
10. Definitions moved to Appendix D.

Background

This General Permit is for the discharge of compost toilet wastewater from composting toilets to groundwater via Land Application. This includes compost toilet wastewater from private dwellings and other types of facilities that use composting toilet technology. Maryland environmental regulations require a permit for the discharge of any quantity of wastewater to ground and surface waters, and includes wastewater discharged by land application. Land application means that the wastewater is discharged directly onto vegetated ground and is considered a beneficial reuse of the wastewater.

Compost toilet wastewater is also considered domestic sewage. Typically, domestic sewage is managed in rural areas for homes and businesses by discharging this wastewater into an onsite subsurface (septic) disposal system. Approval for this type of subsurface discharge is from the local approving authority - usually the county Environmental Health Department. However, because compost toilet wastewater is discharged directly onto the ground and not into the subsurface, a discharge permit must

be obtained from the Maryland Department of Environment.

The Department issues both *individual* and *general* permits. *General* permits are developed for business operations or treatment processes that discharge wastewater with similar chemical characteristics. *General* permits typically require testing of the discharged wastewater for pollutants of concern with numeric limits that must be met, and operation and maintenance requirements to protect human health and the environment. *Individual* and *General* permits are both effective for 5 years.

A General permit simplifies the permit issuance process for the applicant and improves the efficiency of the Department's processing of application for discharge permit authorization. This results in better service to the regulated community by reducing the time to obtain permit coverage. In addition, there are cost savings for the applicant because general permit processing does not require newspaper publication informing the public of the proposed discharge.

Until now, the Department has permitted the onsite discharge of compost toilet wastewater via individual discharge permits. Because the wastewater discharges from most compost toilets have similar chemical characteristics and the permits have similar testing and permit conditions, this category of dischargers is appropriate for coverage by a general permit. Owner/operators will have the choice to apply for individual or general permit coverage.

Permit Applicability

This permit is for the onsite discharge of compost toilet wastewater via Land Application within the territorial boundaries of the State of Maryland. All residences and facilities that want to land apply compost toilet wastewater are required to obtain a discharge permit.

Ineligible Discharges

1. The discharge of *graywater*. '*Graywater*' means wastewater drained from sinks, tubs, showers, dishwashers, clothes washers (excluding laundry water from soiled diapers), and other non-toilet sources.

The applicant must submit documentation from the local approving authority, typically your county (Environmental) Health Department, *that if required*, an onsite sewage disposal system (OSDS) permit has been issued. Evidence of this shall be submitted to the Department's Wastewater Permits Program (WWPP) in support of this General Permit prior to the installation of the composting toilet,

2. The subsurface discharge of compost toilet wastewater.
3. The discharge of compost toilet wastewater to surface waters.

4. The Land Application of compost toilet wastewater in *critical areas* - *UNLESS* the compost toilet system has been approved by the State of Maryland as Best Available Technology (BAT) for the treatment of nitrogen.

Do All Composting Toilets Need a Permit?

No. There are many different types of composting toilet systems available for use. Most composting toilets generate both liquid and solid wastes. This permit is only needed if the compost toilet wastewater will be discharged to groundwater via Land Application (i.e. discharged directly onto the ground surface). If the compost toilet wastewater is disposed of in any other manner, such as via an OSDS, then a discharge permit from the State of Maryland is not required. Discharge of compost toilet wastewater into an OSDS would be permitted by your local approving authority, typically your county (Environmental) Health Department.

Authorization Under This Permit

This general permit regulates the most common pollutants of concern that may be found in compost toilet wastewater. In addition, the permit manages the nutrients in the compost toilet wastewater by appropriate distribution of the wastewater for beneficial plant uptake.

Compost Toilet Wastewater Land Application Areas

This permit allows for the beneficial use of compost toilet wastewater via Land Application on vegetation. The primary nutrient of concern in the wastewater is nitrogen. Different plants can uptake different amounts of nitrogen. The permit includes a nutrient uptake application area calculated using the vegetative uptake, average discharge (in gallons) and the average concentration of total nitrogen in the composting toilet wastewater submitted with the NOI. The permit allows flexibility for the permittee to apply for an alternate application rate for irrigation on vegetation other than grasses.

Compost Toilet Wastewater Chemical Testing: Fecal Coliform Numeric Discharge Limits

This permit requires wastewater testing for fecal coliform before the compost toilet wastewater may be land applied. The amount of fecal coliform in the compost toilet wastewater must be less than the permit's numeric limit of 200 mpn/100 mL prior to Land Application. This proposed testing and discharge limit for fecal coliform is the same as is currently found in individual discharge permits.

What Costs are Associated with this Permit?

There will be cost savings for the permittee in obtaining *general* permit coverage compared to *individual* permit coverage. Processing an *individual* permit includes the costs of publishing notices in a local newspaper informing the public of the permit application. These costs for publication are paid by the applicant. With *general* permit processing, there is no requirement for these public notices and these costs to the permittee are eliminated. Costs associated with wastewater testing will be the same as in an *individual* permit, and the frequency of testing is the same, i.e. prior to Land Application to ensure compliance with the effluent limits.

There are no application or annual fees for this General Permit. This is the same for Individual permits.

For more information:

Information for this permit can be found at <Insert New Link Here> If you have any questions, please contact Jacob Robinson of the Wastewater Permits Program at (410) 537-3780 or by email to the following address: groundwaterpermits.mde@maryland.gov.

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