
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Integrated Environmental Permitting in New Hampshire

New Hampshire's natural environment, and our relationship to it, cannot simply be divided into separate and distinct sectors for ease of management. Rather, human impacts to public health, air, water, soil, bedrock, and wildlife and their habitats follow the same cause-and-effect pattern that predominates many of our other daily activities. For example, the release of a toxic chemical to the atmosphere may eventually fall back to earth in a storm and contaminate a lake or stream. Cross-media transfer has recently been discovered and mapped for perfluoroalkyl substances (also known as PFAS) as an emerging contaminant. Seemingly minor slope changes to one river bank may deflect the water currents to the other bank and erode a neighbor's shoreline property. And, how about trying to construct a new septic system for your home within the groundwater source area for your neighbors' drinking water well? How are such competing uses balanced by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in pursuit of an informed and impartial decision?

The answer is through integrated environmental permitting. NHDES administers a comprehensive environmental permitting system to provide an orderly and equitable means by which to make informed decisions for protecting and preserving our natural resources. These same decisions must also strike a balance between economic opportunity and environmental quality, allow for reasonable and sustainable use of these limited natural resources, address individual property rights, and maintain overall public health and safety. This deliberative process is based on federal and state laws, administrative rules, technical standards, policy guidelines and public input.

Some common examples of projects with integrated environmental permitting requirements:

- **Residential subdivisions** – erosion control, wetlands, land subdivision, stormwater management, shoreland protection, septic system and drinking water supply.
- **Manufacturing facility** – erosion control, wetlands, land subdivision, wastewater pretreatment, storm water management, underground petroleum storage tanks, hazardous waste storage, and air emissions control.
- **Solid waste-to-energy combustor** – erosion control, wetlands, solid waste, air emissions and surface water discharge.
- **Recreational vehicle park/campground** – erosion control, wetlands, land subdivision, septic system, public bathing place, public drinking water system and water conservation plan.

What factors does NHDES consider during an integrated application review?

- The purpose, need and justification for the permit.
- The interrelationships among air, water, soil, wildlife and natural habitats.
- The potential for adverse impacts to human health and safety.
- Consistency with integrated regulatory requirements.
- Expected range of temporary and permanent environmental impacts.
- Degree of public acceptance.
- Identification of anticipated risks and benefits.
- Technical accuracy, content and merits.
- Potential to fulfill the applicant's objectives.

What milestones typify the integrated application process?

- Pre-application planning, project design and formal submittal.
- Administrative completeness determination and notification.
- Technical review and assessment.
- Public comment period (and public hearing, if warranted).
- Technical completeness determination and staff recommendation.
- Final decision and notification.
- Appeals.

Notable variables:

- **Processing times vary.** The time required to review, assess, reach a final decision and prepare the necessary paperwork for an application may range from immediate authorization, if an emergency permit, to a few days or several months, depending on project complexity.
- **Processing fees vary.** There may be no cost, a flat fee, or a formula-based method (e.g., fee based on number of gallons per hour, tons per year, square feet of impact, etc., to process the application).

What types of permitting activities lie within NHDES' jurisdiction?

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| • acid rain | • drinking water supply | • juvenile camps | • soil erosion |
| • air quality | • emissions credits trading | • land subdivision | • solid waste management |
| • air toxics | • emergencies | • landfills | • stormwater |
| • aboveground tanks | • flood control | • medical wastes | • tires |
| • aquatic weed control | • groundwater remediation | • mining | • trails |
| • boat docks | • gravel pits | • open burning | • transfer stations |
| • building construction | • hazardous waste management | • public bathing beaches | • underground tanks |
| • breakwaters | • industrial wastewater treatment | • rivers | • water treatment |
| • campgrounds | • incinerator emissions | • recycling | • water use |
| • contaminated sites | | • septage/sludge | • wetlands |
| • culverts | | • septic systems | |
| • dams | | • shoreland protection | |
| • demolition debris | | | |

Whether a project is a simple one or needs a full array of environmental permits to proceed, there is a structured and impartial permitting system in place to help align an applicant's needs with current resource availability, regulatory requirements and public acceptance. As illustrated above, each project is unique and bears its own set of integrated permitting issues.

Where can I get help?

The NHDES Public Information and Permitting Unit is available to help applicants through the permitting process. Pre-project planning and permit counseling, including pre-application meetings ([Pre-Application Meeting Request](#)), are offered to ensure that all permitting issues have been properly identified and prioritized from the outset. Project coordination, application tracking, status updates, and conflict resolution services are also provided once formal application materials have been received and are undergoing review. By taking advantage of these free services, an applicant may prevent a costly error in construction or the omission of a critical permit **before** the project gets under way.

For more information, please contact:

[Public Information and Permitting Unit](#)

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