

Chapter 5 - Local Public Education

This Statewide Basic Requirement (SBR) requires Highway Agencies to educate appropriate users and employees on the impact of certain of their activities on stormwater quality. Topics include things such as properly disposing of pet wastes, used motor oil, and, if applicable, not feeding wildlife. The Division of Watershed Management, Office of Outreach and Education offers numerous materials and programs that can assist Highway Agencies in developing and implementing a Local Public Education program. Information on these programs and educational materials can be found on the Department's Division of Watershed Management website at www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt. The Department will also provide supplemental educational information on a compact disk supplied to each Highway Agency that can be used to expand the Local Public Education Program.

Local Public Education Program

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Minimum Standard

The Local Public Education Program shall describe how the Highway Agency will distribute educational information to appropriate users and employees of the Highway Agency to satisfy this minimum standard. The following SBR topics shall be included in the Local Public Education Program: Storm Drain Labeling, Pet Waste Control, Improper Waste Disposal Control and Wildlife Feeding Control.

To satisfy the requirement to distribute educational material, Highway Agencies shall provide informational material in any form (e.g., calendars, brochures, signs, sheets, booklets) by locating this material at rest areas and service areas located along the Highway Agency's small MS4.



Providing a "Pet Area", pet waste clean-up bags, and signs would satisfy the requirement to distribute educational material on Pet Waste Control at rest areas and service areas.

Measurable Goal

Highway Agencies shall certify annually that they have met the Local Public Education Program minimum standard.

Implementation Schedule

Within 12 months from the effective date of permit authorization, Highway Agencies shall comply with the Local Public Education Program minimum standard.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Highway Agencies shall make available to appropriate users and employees information in any form (e.g., calendars, brochures, signs, sheets, booklets) containing the SBRs required by the permit at rest

stops and service areas. For example, your Highway Agency could post signs at rest areas that state, “Do Not Feed Wildlife” and “Pick Up After Your Pet.”

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

It is estimated that up to 60% of our existing water pollution problems are attributable to **stormwater/nonpoint pollution**. This pollution can often be linked to our daily activities and lifestyles - things like walking pets, washing cars, changing motor oil, fertilizing the lawn, and littering. When it rains, pollutants from these activities can be washed into storm drains and eventually flow into New Jersey’s surface and ground waters. These pollutants can contaminate our drinking water, as well as degrade aquatic populations and habitats and beaches.

The **improper disposal of hazardous wastes** can impact stormwater, ground water and surface water quality. Many of the products used for the operation, repair, and maintenance of motor vehicles contain chemicals that are harmful to people and the environment. These can include things like antifreeze, motor oil, paint, solvents, battery acid and lead, engine cleaner, rust preventative, and degreasers. These products may contain petroleum hydrocarbons and other toxic, flammable, or corrosive chemical components, all of which may be introduced into the environment if not properly disposed. When such wastes are deliberately or inadvertently discharged into the storm drain (e.g., dumping of used motor oil, flushing of radiator coolant) they can have a significant impact on stormwater quality. Disposing these wastes directly onto the ground can impact ground water quality and disposing of them into a septic system can impact ground water quality and destroy helpful bacteria in the septic system. When hazardous wastes are discharged into the sewer system they may destroy bacteria used for treatment at the sewage treatment plant (STPs). In addition, STPs are not designed to treat hazardous wastes, which pass through the plant, and are consequently discharged to surface water.

For additional information regarding pet waste and wildlife feeding see Chapter 6 of this guidance document.

Storm Drain Inlet Labeling

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Minimum Standard

Highway Agencies shall establish a storm drain inlet labeling program and label all storm drain inlets located at rest areas, service areas, maintenance facilities, and storm drain inlets along streets with sidewalks within the Highway Agency’s small MS4. The program shall establish a schedule for labeling, develop a long term maintenance plan, and when possible, coordinate efforts with watershed groups and volunteer organizations.



Examples of appropriate storm drain inlet labels

Measurable Goal

Highway Agencies shall certify annually that a storm drain inlet labeling program has been developed or is being implemented, and shall identify the number of storm drain inlets labeled within the year.

Implementation Schedule

Within 12 months from the effective date of permit authorization, Highway Agencies shall develop a labeling program for the storm drain inlets identified in the minimum standard. Highway Agencies must either:

- Label a minimum of 50% of the storm drain inlets within 36 months from the EDPA; and label all remaining storm drain inlets on or before 60 months from EDPA; or
- Divide the Highway Agency's small MS4 into two sectors for the purposes of storm drain inlet labeling and include a map of the two sectors in the SPPP. Label the storm drain inlets in one sector within 36 months from the EDPA; and label all remaining storm drain inlets on or before 60 months from EDPA.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The storm drain inlet labeling program, generally undertaken by local volunteer groups in cooperation with the Highway Agency, involves labeling storm drain inlets with a cautionary message about dumping pollutants. The Highway Agency is responsible for placing a label with such a message on or adjacent to all of the storm drain inlets that are located at rest areas, service areas, maintenance facilities, and storm drain inlets along streets with sidewalks operated by the Highway Agency. The message may be a short phrase such as "The Drain is Just for Rain," "Drains to [Local Waterbody]," "No Dumping. Drains to River," "You Dump it, You Drink it. No Waste Here." or it may be a graphic such as a fish. Although a stand-alone graphic is permissible, the Department strongly recommends that a short phrase accompany the graphic. These labels serve as a reminder to individuals that the storm sewer system connects to local surface and/or ground water bodies and that pollutants that enter via this pathway will ultimately end up in those water bodies.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Users and employees of the Highway Agency may not be aware that water in storm sewers is not treated at sewage treatment plants before it reaches its ultimate destination. Additionally, some individuals view storm sewers as trash receptacles for general trash, used oil from their automobiles, paint from home-improvement projects, leftover herbicides, and various other pollutants. The storm drain inlet-labeling program provides an opportunity to educate the public about the connection between storm sewers and local water bodies.

Public participation, through volunteer groups such as environmental organizations, or school groups, is beneficial to the program and shall be used when possible. For safety reasons, the Department recommends that volunteers only label inlets in low traffic/low speed limit areas. An alternative could be for the Highway Agency to perform the labeling work, although this lacks the public participation element which lends itself to education. Another option is to have the work overseen by the Highway Agency but carried out by volunteers to ensure adherence to permit and safety requirements.

Highway Agency Stormwater Guidance

Most people, when informed that the storm sewer discharges to the surface or ground water, will not use the storm sewer as a trash can. Education, especially of young children, continues to pay benefits into the future. The storm drain inlet label stimulates interest in the subject matter of stormwater quality and nonpoint pollution control. Once there is that interest, the rest of the message is easier to convey. Surveys continue to show that the environment, and especially water quality, is a top concern of New Jersey residents. The storm drain inlet labeling program addresses those residents' concerns, shows an effort to improve water quality, and starts the education process that will last a lifetime. For more information on how to plan and implement a Storm Drain Inlet labeling program, go to the Department's website (Division of Watershed Management) at www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt. The Division of Watershed Management has produced a manual that will assist you in planning your storm drain inlet labeling program.