

## **Discharges from reverse osmosis units require LDEQ permit**

Along with such highly visible drought effects as browned grass and withered crops, a less obvious consequence of low water flow is making headlines: saltwater intrusion in the Mississippi River. A wedge of saltwater is making its way upriver and has already passed water intakes for systems in Plaquemines Parish. The threat to drinking water supplies prompted Gov. John Bel Edwards to issue a federally approved Declaration of Emergency Sept. 27.

The wedge continues to move upriver toward New Orleans. The saltwater intrusion is being tracked by the Army Corps of Engineers which is providing public bulletins on its progress. The saltwater may impact public water systems and require businesses and industrial facilities in affected areas to utilize additional on-site potable water treatment systems. Such equipment may produce a discharge which must be regulated by a permit issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ).

LDEQ's Master General Permit for Short-Term and Emergency Discharges is available for the following: discharges of potable water treatment plant filter backwash, reverse osmosis reject water and water softening wastewater. Cooling water discharge may also be eligible for coverage.

LDEQ expects filter backwash wastewater from the Mississippi River to be high in chloride content. High chloride wastewater may not be discharged into smaller freshwater bodies. Typically, the filter backwash wastewater should be returned back to the Mississippi River.

If you need to discharge filter backwash wastewater to an alternative water body, please contact the Water Permits Division at **225-219-9371** or [DEQ-WWWWaterPermits@LA.GOV](mailto:DEQ-WWWWaterPermits@LA.GOV) for guidance on if your proposed discharge qualifies for permit coverage.

Emergency discharges are eligible for coverage under the LPDES General Permit LAG420000 and are located in an area included in a Declaration of Emergency. Discharges are considered provisionally covered under the terms and conditions of the permit immediately. They are fully covered 72 hours after the postmark date or upon hand-delivery of a complete and correct Notice of Intent (form STED-G). The Notice of Intent shall be submitted no later than 10 business days after commencing discharge. Any such discharges must comply with all applicable schedules in the LPDES Permit LAG420000, Short-Term and Emergency Discharges General Permit.

The General Permit effluent limitations and requirements can be viewed here:  
<https://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/Permits/LAG420000.pdf>.

The application form, STED-G, can be found here:  
[http://deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/Permits/STED-G\\_2017.doc](http://deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/Permits/STED-G_2017.doc).

Small businesses may obtain assistance with completion of the Notice of Intent by contacting Kurt Wilson with LDEQ's Small Business Assistance Program in the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) at: **504-736-7767** or [Kurt.Wilson@la.gov](mailto:Kurt.Wilson@la.gov).