

PQR Interview Questions (Part 2)

Use these questions to help guide the discussion of State permitting policies and procedures. The responses provided during this portion of the PQR will be used along with the PQR permit review findings to guide the subsequent file reviews (i.e., do the permits and files reflect the process described by the State).

Begin interview with discussion of answers provided in Pre-State Visit Question set.

1. NPDES Permit Application Process:
 - a. Please walk through the State NPDES permit application process. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - b. Does the State send out a reminder regarding permit renewals? Describe.
 - c. Does the State use EPA or State permit application forms? Are there significant differences between the State and EPA forms?
 - i. If State form is used, when was it last updated?
 - d. Are permit application forms reviewed for completeness? If so, by whom?
 - e. How are permit applications processed and assigned?
2. Permit Development Process:
 - a. Please describe the draft permit development process.
3. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - a. Who develops the draft permit?
 - b. Who provides key information that supports permit development and what type of information is provided? Key information includes WQBELs, TMDLs, and WQ modeling.
 - c. What is the timeline for draft permit development?
4. Technology-Based Effluent Limits (TBELs):
 - a. Describe how TBELs are developed.
5. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - a. Describe any specific tools used in the development of TBELs.
 - b. How are TBELs based on BPJ developed?
6. Water Quality-Based Effluent Limits (WQBELs):
 - a. Describe how water quality-based effluent limits (WQBELs?) are developed.
7. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - a. What data are considered?
 - i. Are ambient data used?
 - ii. If yes, what is the source of the data?
 - iii. What are the rules for use?
 - iv. What is the default for background?

- v. Does use of ambient data differ for RP and limit development (if yes, how)?
 - vi. How are Pollutants of Concerns (POCs) identified?
 - b. How is reasonable potential determined?
 - c. How are limits developed?
 - i. How does the State implement its dilution/mixing policy?
 - ii. Is complete mixing assumed?
 - iii. Does the policy impose mixing zone size constraints?
 - iv. How is the use of mixing zones documented?
 - d. Describe any specific tools (e.g., spreadsheets, models) used in the development of WQBELs.
 - e. Describe how the development of WQBELs is documented.
- 8. Monitoring Requirements:
 - a. Describe how monitoring requirements are developed.
- 9. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - a. What is the basis for monitoring frequency?
 - b. What tools or resources are used to develop monitoring requirements?
- 10. Reporting Requirements:
 - a. Describe how reporting requirements are developed.
- 11. Narrative Conditions:
 - a. What types of narrative conditions are included in NPDES permits?
 - b. Special conditions
 - c. Pretreatment
 - d. Biosolids
- 12. Standard Conditions:
 - a. Is boilerplate language used for standard conditions?
 - b. Source
 - c. Last update
- 13. Fact Sheets:
 - a. Does the State draft fact sheets (or Statement of Basis) for all NPDES permits?
 - b. When is the fact sheet drafted?
 - c. Is a template used to draft fact sheets? Boilerplate?
- 14. 401 Certifications, if Applicable:
 - a. Does the State complete 401 certifications for NPDES permits?
 - b. Who performs the 401 certification process?
 - c. When
 - d. How

15. Administrative Process:
 - a. Describe the administrative process for permit publication.
16. Follow up questions, if necessary:
 - a. Public notice
 - b. Comment
 - c. Comment response
 - d. Hearings
17. Objections and Appeals:
 - a. How objections and appeals handled?
 - b. How often are there objections?
 - c. How are objections resolved?
 - d. How often are there permit appeals?
 - e. Who hears appeals?
18. Administrative Records:
 - a. What is the content and location of the final administrative records?
19. Antidegradation:
 - a. Does the State have formal antidegradation implementation procedures?
 - b. When is antidegradation considered?
 - c. How is the antidegradation process documented in the fact sheet or permit record?
20. Anti-backsliding:
 - a. When are anti-backsliding requirements triggered?
 - b. How is consideration of anti-backsliding documented in the fact sheet or record?
21. Pre and Post-TMDLs:
 - a. How are impaired receiving waters (pre-TMDL) addressed during permit development?
 - b. How are impaired receiving waters (post-TMDL) addressed during permit development?
 - c. How does the State track TMDL implementation in permits?
22. Sufficiently Sensitive Methods:
 - a. Do State requirements specify the use of the appropriately sensitive analytical methods?
 - b. For application data?
 - c. For monitoring?

23. Pathogens:

- a. Does the State use E. coli (freshwater) and/or enterococcus (marine waters) as pathogen water quality criteria?

24. Other State specific areas of interest:

- a. Any priorities the State would like to discuss?
- b. Current permitting initiatives?
- c. Other concerns the State would like to discuss?
- d. Is there anything the State would like to see from EPA Regions or Headquarters? Policies/rules? Assistance in specific areas?

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