

Bypassing- Sometimes the Necessary EVIL

By Jim Heyen, Wastewater Tech

During the spring and summer of this year, much of the state experienced large amounts of rainfall at one time or another and needed assistance. The questions range from “how to report a bypass” to “what report/s do I need to send to NDEQ”. Hopefully, this article can guide you if you have to bypass.

The first question you need to ask is: Why are you going to bypass? In Appendix A, of the city's/village's permit, you will find a section on bypassing guideline/rules.

First of all, according to the permit, you must report an unanticipated bypass immediately.

Bypassing, in accordance to your permit, is defined as “any diversion from or bypass of a treatment facility is prohibited, unless:

- 1) it is unavoidable to prevent loss of life, personal injury or severe property damage,
- 2) no feasible alternative exists, i.e., auxiliary treatment facilities, retention of untreated wastes or maintenance during normal periods of equipment downtime

All NPDES permittees shall notify the general public that a bypass of the treatment system is occurring. The public notification shall include:

- a) location of bypass,
- b) the date the bypass started,
- c) anticipated length of time the bypass will occur, and
- d) an estimate of total volume of wastewater bypassed.

It is also a good idea, in my opinion, to take samples of the bypass for CBOD, Total Suspended Solids, Ammonia and pH.

I hope these points will give you direction if you ever have to bypass and if you have any questions, as always, give me a call.