

NPDES-VGP Regulation

Please be advised of a 2008 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Vessel General Permit (VGP), released by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), with new regulatory requirements pertaining to discharges from commercial vessels that may be applicable to your operation. If you are a terminal operator, please inform all shipping lines/cruise lines calling at your terminal, as this permit will likely affect their vessel operations.

U.S. EPA released its final Vessel General Permit (VGP) on December 19th, 2008 in compliance with a court mandated deadline to bring vessel discharges under the Clean Water Act; however, due to a recent U.S. District Court order, the date of applicability to vessels has been extended to February 6th, 2009. The VGP regulates 28 types of discharges incidental to the normal operation of commercial vessels and requires commercial vessels greater than 79 feet in length to obtain permit coverage for the discharge of pollutants by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) on EPA's electronic NOI filing system beginning on June 19, 2009. Note that recreational vessels are not covered under this permit. Additionally, with exception of ballast water discharges, non-recreational vessels less than 79ft in length and all commercial fishing vessels, regardless of length, are also not subject to this permit.

Please review the VGP permit text closely to determine applicability to your operation, examine the additional permit conditions relevant to California, and be aware of the compliance deadline by visiting the U.S. EPA website at www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels. For specific VGP permit questions, you can email EPA at commercialvesselpermit@epa.gov.