



State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

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STREET ADDRESS:

Lazarus Government Center
50 W. Town St., Suite 700
Columbus, Ohio 43215

TELE: (614) 644-3020 FAX: (614) 644-3184
www.epa.state.oh.us

OHIO E.P.A.
N.W.D.O.

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049

June 21, 2007

Allen County
2PC00005*ID

Mayor & Council
Village of Bluffton
100 E. Elm Street
Bluffton, OH 45817

Re: Notice of Violation – Nine Minimum Control Implementation/ Collection System Inspection

Dear Mayor & Council:

On June 5, 2007, Ohio EPA staff members Tom Poffenbarger, Alex Smaili and I met with WWTP Superintendent Dan Bowden and Streets/Collections Superintendent Kevin Weyer to conduct an inspection of the Village of Bluffton's wastewater collection system and the degree of implementation of the Nine Minimum Controls (NMC) for reducing combined sewer overflow impacts. The Nine Minimum Controls are included in Part II, Item E of your current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit (Ohio EPA No. 2PC00005*ID).

Discussion during the inspection, review of records, and review of information submitted to this office indicates that the Village is in violation of permit requirements calling for implementation of the Nine Minimum Controls. Specifically, the Village is not sufficiently implementing the following minimum controls: Proper operation and regular maintenance programs for the sewer system and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) outfalls (NMC 1) and Prohibition of CSOs during dry weather (NMC 5). Details regarding the Village's efforts for each of the Nine Minimum Controls are contained in Attachment A.

The current status of CSO elimination projects was also discussed during the inspection. It was established that the Village's combined sewers have been completely separated by installing new sanitary or new storm sewers where appropriate. However, it has been determined that the two remaining CSOs cannot be eliminated without negatively impacting users as the outfalls continue to activate during wet weather. Possible factors that could contribute to continued CSO activation may include excessive inflow and infiltration into the collection system, the existence of illegal clean water connections (roof drains, foundation drains, etc.) to the sanitary sewer system, and the continued existence of cross-connections between the storm and sanitary sewers. It is important to note that the Village of Bluffton is required to implement the approved CSO elimination schedule (which calls for elimination of all CSOs by

Ted Strickland, Governor
Lee Fisher, Lieutenant Governor
Chris Korleski, Director

September 30, 2007) located in Part I, C Item A of your current NPDES permit regardless of funding source. Failure to comply with the CSO elimination schedule requirements in your NPDES permit would result in a violation of your NPDES permit.

Our comments and recommendations are as follows:

- 1) The Village should develop and implement a proper operation and regular maintenance program for the collection system. At a minimum, the contents of the program should include:
 - Documentation of organizations and individuals responsible for aspects of the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program,
 - A list of resources (*i.e.*, people and money) allocated to O&M activities,
 - Planning and budgeting procedures for O&M of the collection system,
 - A list of critical facilities (*e.g.*, backflow prevention devices, overflow weirs, CSO treatment facilities, pump stations, grease interceptors, *etc.*),
 - Written procedures and schedules for routine maintenance of equipment, sewers, and catch basins,
 - Written procedures to ensure that regular maintenance is provided,
 - Written procedures for responding to emergency situations,
 - Policies and procedures for training O&M personnel, and
 - A process for periodic reviews and adjustments of the O&M program
- 2) At a minimum, CSO outfalls and associated backflow prevention devices should be inspected weekly during dry weather to ensure that dry weather overflows are not occurring. These inspections should be documented noting date and time of inspection, occurrence of overflow, cause of overflow, any corrective actions taken, and any other items deemed relevant. The development of this inspection log should be included in the program outlined above in comment 1. Any occurrence of CSO activation should be reported in accordance with your NPDES permit requirements to Ohio EPA's Northwest District Office.
- 3) Signs notifying the public of CSO concerns were posted at each of the CSO outfalls. At the same time, the public notification program can be improved. Proper placement of the CSO signs is critical to their functionality. CSO signs should be located directly next to the associated outfall and oriented such that they can be read from any potential direction of approach (this may require posting two-sided signs). Public notification can also be enhanced by periodically including CSO-related information with monthly sewer bills. Appropriate information should include CSO locations, general concerns related to CSOs, contact information where the public can receive additional information, and any other relevant content.

June 21, 2007

Page 3

Please note that proper implementation of the Nine Minimum Controls is critical to your achieving compliance with your NPDES permit. Failure to comply with the Nine Minimum Control implementation requirements or the CSO elimination requirements in your NPDES permit may result in enforcement actions from Ohio EPA.

If you have questions/concerns regarding this report, I can be reached by telephone at (614) 644-2118 or email at dan.gill@epa.state.oh.us.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Gill
Environmental Specialist
Division of Surface Water, Ohio EPA
Central Office

Attachments

pc: Tom Poffenbarger, DSW, NWDO
DSW-CO File

Attachment A
Village of Bluffton Combined Sewer Overflow Reconnaissance Inspection

Part II, Other Requirements, Item E., in the permittee's NPDES permit (Ohio EPA No. 2PC00005), indicates that the entire wastewater treatment system shall be operated and maintained so that the total loading of pollutants discharged during wet weather is minimized. This is to be accomplished through use of what is known as the Nine Minimum Controls. Part II.B. of the National CSO Control Policy discusses implementation requirements for these control measures, which are listed and discussed below.

1. Proper operation and regular maintenance programs for the sewer system and CSOs.

Village of Bluffton staff operates and maintains the WWTP and collection system. The permittee makes weekly inspections of the two CSO outfalls, in addition to inspections conducted during rain events. CSO inspections are not currently documented.

The permittee maintains a detailed and up-to-date sewer collection system map for use in planning and inspections. Efforts to digitize these materials using GIS-based software have been initiated. The permittee indicated that operation and maintenance of the sewer lines is largely complaint driven. Inspections of the sewer lines are not documented, nor is a centralized log book maintained of any maintenance or repair activities. It follows that the overall condition of the collection system cannot be described as good as a result of proper preventative operation and maintenance (O&M) measures. **The permittee should develop and implement a proper operation and regular maintenance program for the collection system. The body of this letter contains minimum program characteristics that should be included (see comment 1).**

2. Maximum use of the collection system for storage.

All CSOs have backflow prevention devices (flapgates) installed on them. These are inspected weekly to ensure proper operation.

3. Review and modification of pretreatment requirements to assure CSO impacts are minimized.

The impact of industrial activity within the Village of Bluffton on CSO activity is limited. The discharge volume of these industries has been evaluated and deemed insignificant with respect to other sources of wastewater.

4. Maximize flow at the WWTP for treatment.

Village staff indicated that the average daily design flow for the WWTP is approximately

1.9 million gallons (MGD). It was also stated by the permittee that the WWTP is capable of handling sustained peak flows of approximately 4 MGD. During wet weather events, the permittee operates the WWTP at these peak levels until wet weather subsides.

5. Prohibition of CSOs during dry weather.

The permittee makes weekly inspections of CSOs, however, these inspections are not documented. **The body of this letter addresses measures the permittee should take to properly implement this minimum control (see comment 2).**

6. Control of Solid and Floatable Materials in CSOs.

The permittee cleans catch basins throughout the village twice each year.

7. Pollution prevention.

The village operates street sweeping equipment twice each year. The Village also operates a leaf removal program.

8. Public Notification to ensure that the public receives adequate notification of CSO occurrences and CSO impacts.

Signs are posted at CSO locations to inform the public that contact with discharges from these structures should be avoided. **The body of this letter addresses measures the permittee should take to improve implementation of this minimum control (see comment 3).**

9. Monitoring to effectively characterize CSO impacts and the efficacy of CSO controls.

The permittee is continuing to monitor its system in accordance with their NPDES permit requirements. This information should be used to evaluate effectiveness of sewerage system improvements.