

BIOSOLIDS FACTS

Published by the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District's Land Application Program



What are biosolids?

Biosolids are the nutrient-rich organic product of wastewater treatment. Biosolids are a valuable resource containing essential plant nutrients and organic matter and can be recycled as a fertilizer and soil amendment.

Biosolids land application in the State of Minnesota is regulated by both federal and state law. Local units of government, like counties and townships, may also have ordinances relating to land application.

Federal government role

Under the authority of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established comprehensive requirements for the management of biosolids. The resulting regulation, *The Standards for the Use or Disposal of Sewage Sludge* (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 503), is commonly referred to as the Part 503 Rule. The Part 503 Rule sets minimum national standards for the use or disposal of biosolids.

The Part 503 Rule applies to both the producer and the applier of biosolids, as well as to the landowner and the leaseholder, if the land is rented. The Part 503 Rule establishes operating standards that must be met to control pathogens (disease-causing

organisms) and to protect public health. It also establishes concentration limits and maximum application rates for specific pollutants in biosolids. In addition, there are requirements for management practices, frequency of monitoring, record keeping, and reporting.

State government role

The Part 503 Rule applies nation-wide, and each state must regulate biosolids land application to an extent that is as strict as or more stringent than the federal standards. Minnesota has incorporated the minimum federal rules into its own land application rules, which are found in Chapter 7041 of the Minnesota Rules. In addition, Minnesota regulates site permitting, soil testing frequency, notification procedures, storage procedures, and application rates. Minnesota also requires certification and licensing of land application operators and inspectors. Facilities that produce or land apply biosolids must have certified land
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Prior to land application of WLSSD's biosolids, each site is screened for suitability and must receive approval from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.



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application operators on staff. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is responsible for administering the state's program and monitoring compliance with state land application rules. Wastewater treatment plants must obtain authorization from the MPCA to operate a biosolids land application program.

Enforcement

Both the EPA regional office in Chicago and the MPCA enforce the biosolids rules. The MPCA monitors land application programs for compliance and enforces state regulations out of their office in St. Paul. Penalties for not complying with biosolids regulations may be either civil or criminal.

Resources for more information on biosolids regulations:

Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
2626 Courtland St.
Duluth, MN 55806
(218) 722-3336
www.wlssd.duluth.mn.us

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194
(651) 297-2274 or (800) 646-6247
www.pca.state.mn.us

U.S. EPA Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590
(312) 353-2000 or (800) 621-8432
www.epa.gov

Regulations and Publications:

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40,
Part 503

www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/40cfr503_02.html

Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7041

www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/7041/

Agricultural Utilization of Sewage Sludge: A
Twenty-Year Study at the Rosemount
Agricultural Experiment Station, University of
Minnesota [www.extension.umn.edu/
distribution/cropsystems/DC6523.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC6523.html)

Biosolids Applied to Land: Advancing
Standards and Practices
www.nap.edu/books/0309084865/html

Environmental Regulations and Technology:
Control of Pathogens and Vector Attraction in
Sewage Sludge
[www.epa.gov/ORD/NRMRL/Pubs/1999/625
R99013.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ORD/NRMRL/Pubs/1999/625R99013.pdf)

Other Web sites:

Association of Metropolitan
Sewerage Agencies
www.amsa-cleanwater.org

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services
[www.metrocouncil.org/environment/
environment.htm](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/environment.htm)

National Biosolids Partnership
biosolids.policy.net

Northwest Biosolids Management Association
www.nwbiosolids.org

Water Environment Federation
www.wef.org

WLSSD Biosolids Fact Sheets

- #1 General Information
- #2 Wastewater Treatment
- #3 Biosolids Processing and Quality Control
- #4 Regulation of Biosolids Land Application
- #5 Why Biosolids are Safe: Pathogens
- #6 Why Biosolids are Safe: Metals
- #7 Why Biosolids are Safe: Trace Organics
- #8 Best Management Practices for Land Application
- #9 Using Biosolids as a Fertilizer
- #10 Biosolids Markets and Uses

Call the WLSSD Hotline
for more information:
218-722-0761



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