

Guidelines For Wastewater Treatment Inspection Ratings

The following guidelines define each of the five inspection rating categories (Excellent, Acceptable, Conditionally Acceptable, Marginal, and Unacceptable). In assigning an overall rating to an inspection, the inspector will use the standards given below as well as their judgement as to the weight of the deficiencies noted.

- EXCELLENT:** This rating is reserved for those facilities whose performance exceeds the minimum standards and is outstanding in every aspect that was reviewed in the inspection.
- In the past twelve months of self-monitoring data there were no effluent permit limit violations except for pH, Cl₂ residual, and settleable solids which could have up to 1% violations each.
 - All equipment in service and in top condition.
 - All records and reports in order.
 - Exceptional maintenance program in place.
 - Safety program in place and well run (includes: equipment and written procedures for: Lock-out/Tag-out, Confined Space Entry, back flow protection, ...).
 - Sludge management program more than adequate.
 - Buildings and grounds well maintained and orderly.
 - Laboratory analytical procedures are extraordinary (established and well maintained QA/QC program, well trained laboratory technician, properly calibrated lab equipment, etc., ...).
 - Operator certification and training up to date (at or above grade level of facility)

No written response to this inspection is required

ACCEPTABLE:

This rating is given to inspections for those facilities whose performance meets the minimum standards for all program elements.

- There were few effluent violations in the previous twelve months; up to one each for the major permit parameter (BOD, TSS, total phosphorus, coliform, etc., ...) and less than 5% violations for pH, Cl₂ residual, and/or settleable solids. The violations must be fully and reasonably explained and the cause corrected. Note: aerated lagoons may experience more than one TSS violation and still qualify for an “Acceptable” rating, if the TSS violations were caused by algae blooms.
- All necessary equipment to remain in compliance must be operable (to include all the necessary back-up equipment).
- All records and reports in order.
- Adequate maintenance program in place.
- Safety program in place (to include: Lock-out/Tag-out procedures, Confined Space Entry program, back flow protection, ...).
- Sludge management program adequate.
- Buildings and grounds kept up.
- Laboratory procedures are appropriate (established QA/QC program, trained laboratory technician, etc., ...).
- Operator certification and training up-to-date.

No written response to this inspection is required.

**CONDITIONALLY
ACCEPTABLE:**

An inspection on those facilities which meet the minimum standards for most program elements and are in the process of correcting deficiencies will receive this rating. The standards for the program elements are basically the same as for an acceptable rating. A response is required, and if a satisfactory written response which details the correction of the deficiency(ies) is received within the time frame set, the inspection rating will be upgraded to an **ACCEPTABLE** through a letter to the Permittee and the file.

MARGINAL:

This rating is given to inspections on facilities which do not meet the minimum standards in one or more of the program elements and/or have had a number of effluent violations. This rating is usually given in cases where older/poorly designed facilities are the reason for the deficiencies found.

- Violations of the major effluent permit parameter limits occurred, up to two (2) in each parameter. For pH, Cl₂ residual, and/or settleable solids less than 10% of effluent violations occurred.
- Major permit parameter violations; two (2) or less in any one major permit parameter.
- All equipment necessary to properly operate facility is on-line (back-up equipment could be down for repairs).
- Maintenance program in place.
- Records and reports adequate.
- Safety program adequate (to include: Lock-out/Tag-out, Confined Space Entry program, back flow protection, ...).
- Sludge management program adequate.
- Buildings and grounds showing signs of age.
- Laboratory procedures are adequate (established QA/QC program, well-trained laboratory technician, etc., ...).
- Operator certification and training up to date.

A written response to this inspection is required.

UNACCEPTABLE:

This rating is reserved for those facilities which do not meet the minimum standards in one or more program elements, with a number of effluent permit violations and the deficiencies were caused by poor operations and/or management.

- There were major permit limit violations during the period reviewed. More than two (2) violations in any major permit parameter (BOD and/or TSS, and/or total phosphorus, and/or coliform, etc., ...).
- More than a 10% violation rate for pH, Cl₂ residual, and/or settleable solids.
- Major equipment components out of service.
- Records and reports inadequate (or falsification/selective sampling suspected).
- Serious deferred maintenance.
- Safety program inadequate (hazardous conditions may exist).
- Sludge management program inadequate.
- Buildings and grounds poorly maintained.
- Laboratory procedures are inadequate (lack of training, poor technical ability, inadequate QA/QC, selective sampling may exist, etc., ...).
- Operator certification and training inadequate (lack of training, lack of back-up operator, etc., ...).

A written response to this inspection is required.
An enforcement action may ensue.

NOTES:

INDUSTRIAL INSPECTIONS:

Follow the same format but with no concern for the buildings and grounds. Influent loading may be assessed, and if it is the reason for non-compliance incidents, will enter into rating.

SUBSEQUENT INSPECTIONS:

If deficiencies from a previous inspection have not been corrected, this will be taken into account and may lower the current inspection rating.

ASSESSING VIOLATIONS:

When assessing the number of violations for major effluent permit parameters for a facility, the monthly average limit, weekly average limit and daily maximum limit for each parameter shall be construed to be separate major effluent permit parameters.