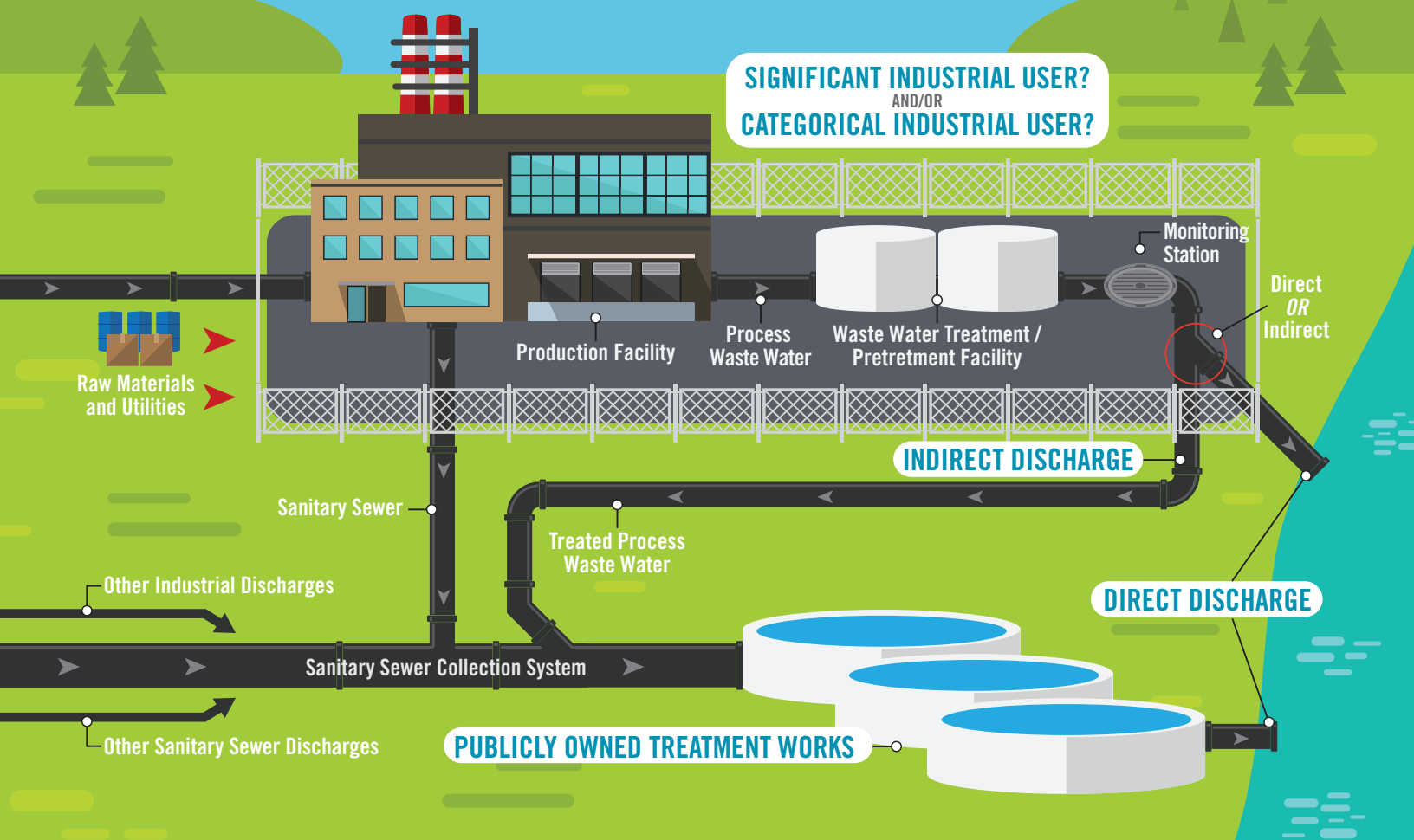


DO YOU KNOW THE DISCHARGE AND USER CLASSIFICATION OF YOUR PLANT?



Understanding Your Wastewater Discharge

In an industrial production facility, water, raw materials and supplies used during production and cleaning result in process wastewater unsuitable for discharge back into the environment or the sanitary sewer collection system. Treatment at a wastewater treatment plant (or pretreatment facility) is required before it can be discharged. The key questions: are you an indirect or direct discharger and are you a Categorical Industrial User? For indirect dischargers, are you a Significant Industrial User?

It's important to understand that the regulations and permitting requirements that apply to your wastewater discharge depend on the wastewater destination. A direct discharge to a body of water such as stream or lake and an indirect, intermediary discharge through a local publicly owned treatment works (POTW) facility follow a distinct set of guidelines.

From National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to discharge criteria of the local POTW, knowing the unique classifications of your wastewater treatment facility and abiding by the rules set forth for each one will help you maintain a compliant, operating production facility.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

PUBLICLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS (POTW)

The municipal wastewater treatment plant that collects and receives the wastewaters that are discharged into the sanitary sewer collection system within the sewer shed. The POTW is a physical, chemical and biological treatment system of properly sequenced processes that operates as a direct discharger under a direct discharge permit. POTWs are responsible for establishing and regulating the discharge limits of the dischargers into the sanitary sewer collection system.

INDIRECT DISCHARGER

Collects and treats process/production wastewater in an on-site pretreatment facility prior to discharge into the public sanitary sewer collection system. The pretreatment facility treats to a water quality that is acceptable for treatment at the POTW. The indirect discharge permit is typically issued and regulated by the POTW.

DIRECT DISCHARGER

Collects and treats process/production wastewater in an on-site wastewater treatment facility prior to discharge directly into the environment, typically a receiving body of water such as a stream, river or lake. Since the discharge is directly into the environment, treatment and reporting requirements are typically more stringent than that of an Indirect Discharger. Direct discharge permits, also known as NPDES permits, are typically issued and regulated at the state level and are based on receiving water body quality criteria and impact on the receiving water body. Direct discharge limits may take a year or more to establish, depending on historical water quality data and public scrutiny.

SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRIAL USER (SIU)

An industrial user that meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Discharges an average of 25,000 gallons per day or more of process wastewater to the POTW
- Contributes a process waste stream that makes up five percent or more of the average dry weather hydraulic or organic capacity of the POTW
- Is classified by the Control Authority on the basis that the industrial user has reasonable potential to adversely affect the POTW's operation or ability to achieve its own discharge compliance.

CATEGORICAL INDUSTRIAL USER (CIU)

An industrial user that is regulated by one or more of the federal regulations commonly referred to as Categorical Pretreatment Standards (40 CFR 403 and 40 CFR 405 – 471). CIUs must comply with the more stringent of the categorical pretreatment standards and the local limits established by the POTW receiving the wastewater discharge. A CIU is also a SIU and can be classified as significant or non-significant by the local Control Authority.

LET'S TALK WASTEWATER

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For more about this topic, check out John's article *Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facilities: Reduce Your Risk with Proactive Assessments*.