

Consent Decree Glossary

Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) – Measures the speed at which organisms use up the oxygen in a body of water. When BOD is too high, as a result of the introduction of organisms from effluent, for example, aquatic wildlife (fish, etc.) cannot get the oxygen they need. A high level of BOD is an indicator that wastewater treatment is not adequate.

Clean Water Act (CWA) – The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 were passed in response to public concerns over water quality. In 1977, the law was amended and became commonly known as the Clean Water Act. The Act established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and gave the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry. The Clean Water Act addresses surface water quality.

Consent Decree – A legal document, approved by a judge, that formalizes an agreement reached between EPA and potentially responsible parties (PRPs) through which PRPs will conduct all or part of a cleanup action. The Consent Decree that the Baton Rouge City/Parish is under relates specifically to violations of the federal Clean Water Act and mandates that the City/Parish comply with its NPDES permits and the Clean Water Act.

Cross connection – Any permanent or temporary physical connection which allows stormwater or other waters (except sanitary sewage and industrial wastewater) to flow into the wastewater collection system. The Baton Rouge Consent Decree mandates that Baton Rouge City/Parish permanently seal or eliminate such cross connections when identified.

Effluent – The outflow from a sewage treatment facility (i.e. wastewater after it is treated at the treatment plant) or the wastewater discharged from industrial facilities

Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) – The federal government agency charged with protecting human health and with safeguarding the natural environment: air, water, and land. The EPA was established by President Richard Nixon and began operation on December 2, 1970.

Force main – The pipeline that discharges water or wastewater from a pump station.

Inflow/Infiltration (I&I, or I/I) – Inflow and infiltration are terms used to describe the ways that groundwater and stormwater enter the sanitary sewer system. Inflow is water that is enters into the sewer system through improper connections, such as downspouts and groundwater sump pumps. Infiltration is groundwater that enters the sewer system through leaks in the pipe from cracks, etc.

Influent – Wastewater going into the wastewater treatment plant

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) – The Louisiana state agency charged with protecting the environment and regulating the activities of residents, businesses and industries in the state of Louisiana that affect the environment. LDEQ is charged with carrying out the regulations of the US Environmental Protection Agency within the state of Louisiana.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) – The federal permitting program that controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches.

Permit – The legal document that allows a municipality to discharge wastewater into public waterways. The permit contains requirements, restrictions and limitations to the operation of treatment facilities and the quality of effluent in order to protect public waters from pollution.

Pump station – A facility that forcibly moves water or wastewater through a system; these are typically used when gravity will not move the liquid.

Remedial Measures Action Plans (RMAP) – The Consent Decree requires the Baton Rouge City/Parish follow a Collection System Remedial Program which is intended to minimize and prevent SSOs. The RMAP1 and RMAP2 projects were identified as a part of the Collection System Remedial Program solution.

Relief sewer – Sewer that is designed to relieve pressure on another system during periods of heavy flow, such as rainfall.

Remedial action – Any action done to correct past mistakes or actions that caused harm.

Sanitary Sewer – A pipe located in the street or easement that is designed solely to transport wastewater from sanitary fixtures inside your house or place of business. Sanitary fixtures include toilets, sinks, bathtubs, showers and lavatories.

Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO)- – A discharge of untreated, raw wastewater into local waterways. Overflows occur when there is too much wastewater for the sewer system or treatment plants to handle, such as after heavy rainstorms. During SSOs, untreated wastewater overflows from the sewers or from manholes connected to the sewers. SSOs may also occur during wet weather as stormwater enters the sewer system through defects, or in dry weather due to blockages of the line, or equipment failure at pump stations, etc.

Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) – These projects consist of connecting sewage lines in certain subdivisions and urbanized areas within the Baton Rouge City/Parish to the City/Parish wastewater treatment plants.

Total Suspended Solids (TSS) – All particles suspended in water that will not pass through a filter. Suspended solids are present in sanitary wastewater and many types of industrial

wastewater. TSS causes a water body to lose its ability to support a diversity of aquatic life by absorbing heat, increasing water temperature and decreasing dissolved oxygen levels.

Unauthorized Discharge – Any discharge of wastewater from the collection system from any point other than the outfall specific in the applicable NPDES permit, regardless of whether such discharge reaches navigable waters. The term does not include either (1) discharges that do not violate the CWA, or (2) discharges in compliance with Section XVI of the Consent Decree Interim Effluent Limits.

Wastewater – Liquid material collected from residences, offices, and institutions after it has been used for washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes. Industrial wastewater refers to wastewater from manufacturing facilities. Municipal wastewater is a general term applied to any liquid treated in a municipal treatment facility and usually includes a mixture of sanitary and pretreated industrial wastes.