



New  
Jersey  
Department of  
Environmental  
Protection

## COMPLIANCE ADVISORY

# Enforcement **Alert**

*Making You Aware of Anticipated Enforcement Activities*

Compliance and Enforcement

Issued: March 2006

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## ***DEP to Step Up Enforcement of Unpermitted Discharges from Hydrodemolition Units***

### **Who is affected by this initiative?**

Facilities and companies that use hydrodemolition units for construction or rehabilitation projects and those for whom the work is done.

### **Why is DEP Enforcement targeting this regulated group?**

Hydrodemolition units use high-pressure water to remove or demolish concrete while maintaining the integrity of the original structure. The equipment is designed to remove concrete to a prescribed depth of solid concrete or to completely remove weakened, unsound concrete so an ideal bonding surface is available for a new overlay. However, the wastewater produced by this process can seriously impair groundwater and any other surface water bodies into which it is discharged. Hydrodemolition debris consists of wet sand, aggregate, chips or chunks of concrete, and slurry water (suspended cement particles in water). In addition to causing the milky-white slurry water, the cement particles increase the pH of the water to between pH10 (ammonia) and pH12 (lye, Drano®). The typical pH range of natural surface water is between pH6 and pH8.

### **What is DEP doing?**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has determined that such wastewater discharges to the state's groundwater or surface waters, either directly or indirectly via storm sewers, have a major impact on water quality and will not be permitted under the New Jersey Water Pollution Control Act. As such, DEP's Water Compliance and Enforcement Program will be actively pursuing enforcement actions for unpermitted wastewater discharge from hydrodemolition units. Penalties will be issued, to the hydrodemolition company and to the facility that hired them, for both the illegal discharge and any resulting environmental damages.

### **What should I do?**

Wastewater from a hydrodemolition unit must not be discharged onto the ground or into any surface water body. Instead, it must be collected and hauled off-site or diverted to a wastewater treatment plant. One method of effective wastewater collection is to connect a vacuum truck directly to the hydrodemolition unit. If you choose to discharge to a sanitary collection system, approval from the wastewater treatment plant is required prior to discharge. It also is likely that there will be a pretreatment requirement for some level of solids removal or pH adjustment.

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## Who should I contact with questions?

For permitting questions, please contact:

**Bureau of Point Source Permitting** (surface water) (609) 292-4860

**Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control** (groundwater) (609) 633-7021

For compliance, inspection or enforcement questions, please contact:

**Water Compliance and Enforcement-Northern Field Office**  
(Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset,  
Sussex and Warren counties) (973) 656-4099

**Water Compliance and Enforcement-Central Field Office**  
(Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union counties) (609) 584-4200

**Water Compliance and Enforcement-Southern Field Office**  
(Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester  
and Salem counties) (856) 614-3655

## Where can I get more information?

The following Web sites can be accessed for additional information:

Enforcement	<a href="http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/water.html">www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/water.html</a>
Point source permitting	<a href="http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/psp1n2.htm">www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/psp1n2.htm</a>
Nonpoint pollution control	<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/nonpoint.htm">www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/nonpoint.htm</a>

Please note this advisory is intended to be a summary explanation of a department initiative. It does not include all potentially applicable requirements. If you have any questions related to compliance with this initiative, please contact the Enforcement numbers listed above.