



Outdoor Shooting Ranges

Outdoor shooting ranges, including target ranges, firing ranges, trap and skeet ranges, and law enforcement training ranges, provide valuable public benefits, including recreation and training. However, they are also subject to certain environmental protection requirements to safeguard Minnesota's citizens and environment.

This fact sheet offers guidance on how the requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) affect outdoor shooting ranges. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also provides guidance and assistance to outdoor shooting range operators, available on the DNR's website at:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>.

In general, Minnesota has adopted the shooting range construction and operation standards contained in the 1999 edition of the *Range Source Book: A Guide to Planning and Construction* published by the National Rifle Association. However, additional environmental regulations may apply to your shooting range.

The MPCA recommends that all shooting ranges in Minnesota prepare an Environmental Stewardship Plan to plan how they will meet the mandatory requirements discussed in this fact sheet. See **More information**.

When is a shooting range regulated?

Environmental requirements may apply to a shooting range when it is being:

- constructed or renovated
- operated
- closed

Construction and renovation

If construction at your shooting range will together disturb one acre or more of soil, you must obtain a Construction Stormwater (CSW) Permit. Information about CSW permits, related requirements, and staff contacts is available on the MPCA's [CSW webpage](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/wfhya5b) at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/wfhya5b>.

If you will be demolishing buildings during your construction or renovation, ensure that you first remove all problem materials, such as asbestos, and notify the MPCA. A complete list of problem materials that must be removed from a structure to be demolished or renovated, and instructions for notifying the MPCA, are available in MPCA fact sheet #w-sw4-07, [Pre-renovation or Demolition Requirements](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-sw4-07.pdf), at:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-sw4-07.pdf>.

The DNR has published voluntary best design and construction practices for shooting ranges in publication *Outdoor Shooting Ranges: Best Practices*, available on the DNR's website at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>.

Note: In addition to these state requirements, construction and renovation at a shooting range may also require local zoning and conditional use approvals from municipalities, townships, or county governments.

Operation

If any projectiles, target pieces, wadding, or other materials from your shooting range could fall in a lake, pond, river, stream, or wetland, and the range cannot be reoriented to completely prevent such fall, the site may require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Find more information regarding NPDES permits, related requirements, and staff contacts on the MPCA's [Water Quality Permit Application webpage](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/enzq915) at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/enzq915>.

Operating shooting ranges are not required to remove shooting materials that fall on land on the range. However, voluntarily periodically cleaning bullet traps and ‘sifting’ backstops to remove lead projectiles for recycling, as well as recovering other shooting wastes, can lower your range’s long-term environmental liability and eventual closure cost. Guidance for managing removed projectiles and backstop materials is available in MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-04, [Ammunition, Fireworks and Explosive Waste](#), at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw4-04.pdf>.

You may reuse soil from a shooting range on the same property whether it is contaminated or not, however if it is removed from the site, you must manage it as a potentially hazardous waste and evaluate it. For more information on waste evaluation, see MPCA fact sheet #w-hw1-01, [Evaluate Waste](#), at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw1-01.pdf>.

While the normal MPCA noise standards do not apply to shooting ranges, the Minnesota Legislature has set a maximum level, including ambient noise, of 63 decibels (dBA), measured over an hour at the shooting range property line. You may find more explanation of this standard in the DNR’s publication *Minnesota’s Shooting Range Protection Act*, available on the DNR’s website at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>.

Closure

Though the MPCA’s regulations do not require their removal, if projectiles, other fall materials, and ground contamination are not removed from a shooting range when it is permanently closed, they may be considered abandoned and become subject to statutory hazardous waste liability under federal and state Superfund and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) statutes. Manage removed projectiles and backstop materials as discussed in MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-04, [Ammunition, Fireworks and Explosive Waste](#), at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw4-04.pdf>.

The MPCA’s Brownfields Program can provide you liability assurances after voluntary cleanup of a closed shooting range under MPCA oversight. More information on the Brownfields Program and staff contacts is available on the MPCA’s [Brownfields webpage](#) at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/lupq7f9>.

More information

Guidance and requirements in this fact sheet were compiled from Minnesota Statutes, Chapters § 87A, 115, 115B, and 116; and Minnesota Rules, Chapters 7001, 7035, 7045, 7050, and 7053. To review Minnesota Statutes and Rules, visit the Office of the Revisor of Statutes at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs>.

For more information, contact your nearest MPCA regional staff. For information about improving your range design or operation to reduce environmental impact, contact the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP). The Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) can provide you with free, confidential regulatory compliance assistance.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Toll free (all offices)..... 1-800-657-3864
Brainerd.....218-828-2492
Detroit Lakes218-847-1519
Duluth.....218-723-4660
Mankato507-389-5977
Marshall507-537-7146
Rochester507-285-7343
St. Paul.....651-296-6300
Willmar320-214-3786
Website<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/>

Minnesota Technical Assistance Program

Toll free 1-800-247-0015
Metro 612-624-1300
Website..... <http://www.mntap.umn.edu/>

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

Toll free 1-800-657-3938
Metro 651-282-6143
Website.. <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap/>

Minnesota Duty Officer

Toll free 1-800-422-0798
Metro 651-649-5451