



MS4 SWPPP Document:

Frequently Asked Questions – TMDLs

Q: Where can I find the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report and implementation plan?

A: Visit the MPCA TMDL Projects¹ website and click on the 'Approved' tab. TMDL projects are arranged by EPA approval date. To access information for a specific TMDL click on the TMDL project of your choice. Once on the TMDL project page scroll down to the 'TMDL report and implementation plan' section.

Q: Can I use a Best Management Practice (BMP) to address multiple TMDLs?

A: Yes, a BMP may address multiple TMDLs. The BMP must be in the watershed of the impaired water and address the pollutant of concern to receive credit for a reduction in pollutant loading.

Q: Why are there multiple Wasteload Allocations (WLAs) for the same impaired water in a TMDL report?

A: There may be a few reasons why you see multiple WLAs for the same impaired water in a TMDL report. Rivers and streams have multiple flow regimes (usually five — very high, high, mid-range, dry, and low) and a TMDL, including a WLA, is designated for each regime. Rivers and streams often have multiple impaired reaches (a reach is a segment of a stream, river, or ditch, generally defined from confluence to confluence, or by some other distinguishing hydrologic feature) of the river and a TMDL with an associated WLA is designated for each reach. An impaired water body may also have multiple pollutants receiving separate TMDLs and associated WLAs.

Q: I have many WLAs for the same impaired water; do I need to have an interim milestone for each WLA?

A: No, all WLAs for a specific pollutant in the same impaired water can be grouped together in the interim milestones section of the TMDL Attachment Spreadsheet. Each WLA must still be listed individually on the TMDL WLA Spreadsheet tab. Refer to the Example Compliance Schedule on the MS4 Permit TMDL Attachment Spreadsheet to view how grouping WLAs by TMDL project may look.

Q: How do I calculate my MS4's portion of a categorical WLA?

A: It is not necessary to derive an individual load from a categorical WLA to complete the application materials. One piece of information that must be submitted with the application is the type of WLA — individual or categorical, which is available in the MS4 TMDL Master List. The information submitted on the compliance schedule is the same regardless of the type of WLA.

Again it is not a requirement to calculate your portion of a categorical WLA, but if you decide you want to calculate your MS4's portion of a categorical WLA, there are multiple approaches you may use to do so. Example approaches include the following:

¹ <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/0agxa04>

- Area approach. The WLA can be divided based on the relative area of each MS4. Only the areas within the study watershed should be considered. For example, if two MS4s have a WLA of 100 lbs/day, MS4 A covers 75 percent of the study area and MS4 B covers 25 percent of the study area, the target loads would be 75 lbs/day for MS4 A and 25 lbs/day for MS4 B. This is a desirable approach if the pollutant loading per unit area is considered to be similar across all MS4s.
- Population approach. The WLA can be divided based on the relative population of each MS4. Only the population living within the study watershed should be considered. This approach is similar to the area approach but may be more desirable if the data are easier to access than the area information and if population densities are considered homogenous across all MS4 areas.
- Land use approach. Loads can be apportioned based on land use if loading from the MS4s differs significantly because of the land use. For example, assume two MS4s have a categorical WLA of 100 lbs/day. MS4 A has an area of 60 acres that includes 40 acres of parkland and 20 acres of commercial. MS4 B has an area of 40 acres that consists of residential land use. Assume parkland has a loading factor of 1, commercial 2, and residential 3. Multiplying the loading factors by acres gives a value of 80 for MS4 A and 120 for MS4 B. MS4 B therefore accounts for 60 percent of the loading and has a target load of 60 lbs/day, compared to 40 lbs/day for MS4 A. This method requires derivation of land use loading factors. These are relatively easy to develop for phosphorus, suspended sediment and possibly fecal coliform.
- Model approach. A MS4 can replicate the model used for the TMDL to calculate its current pollutant load. This can be compared to the estimate of current load for all MS4s. The fraction contribution from the MS4 to overall loading is multiplied by the overall MS4 WLA to derive the individual target loads for the MS4.
- Percent impervious can be used to estimate target loads.

Q: How can we develop a compliance schedule if we are unsure of where we stand in comparison to the WLA?

A: An initial interim milestone could be an evaluation of your MS4's current pollutant loading. Also include subsequent interim milestones in the compliance schedule which you will plan to implement in the event that you determine your MS4 is not meeting its assigned WLA.

Q: Are MS4s expected to model their entire system at this time in order to determine current loading and the progress yet to be made to achieve a WLA?

A: No. It is not necessary to know the current loading from an MS4 to fill out the application materials, particularly if you assume a reduction in current loading will be necessary to achieve a WLA. Additionally, there are many methods for estimating loading that do not involve full water quality models. A discussion of these is included in the document [Addressing TMDL Requirements in MS4 General Permit Applications and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program Documents](#)².

Q: What if we discover we are actually closer to meeting our WLA than we initially thought and actually do not need as many BMPs as were proposed in the compliance schedule?

A: Modifications to a compliance schedule can be made. Note any changes in the Annual Report along with an explanation of that change.

² <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=20105>

Q: What is the difference between an implementation date tied to an interim milestone and a WLA target date?

A: The implementation dates are tied to the completion of interim milestones and can be used to evaluate compliance with the permit. The target date is an estimation of when the WLA will be fully met.

Q: How should I address an impaired water that is being proposed for delisting?

A: All WLAs associated with the impaired water must still be submitted on the TMDL WLA Spreadsheet tab of TMDL Attachment Spreadsheet. On the Compliance Schedule tab, indicate the receiving water is being considered for delisting in the additional information section and indicate a commitment to maintain at least the same level of treatment.

Q: What happens if we determine we need to change a BMP on our compliance schedule?

A: You may inform the MPCA of the change in your Annual Report.

Q: We do not have an implementation plan available for one of our TMDLs. How can we determine our interim milestones and long-term strategies beyond the permit term without an implementation plan?

A: Implementation plans are made available to offer possible BMPs and reduction strategies to address the pollutant of concern in the TMDL report. However, an implementation plan that accompanies a TMDL report does not contain any compliance requirements. TMDL compliance requirements lie within the MS4 Permit. Therefore, MS4s have the freedom to implement any BMPs regardless if the implementation plan lists them or not. MS4s should explore methods for reducing the pollutant of concern and determine BMPs that it can utilize to make progress towards achieving its WLA.

The [Stormwater Manual](#)³ has a section called [Process for selecting Best Management Practices](#)⁴, which contains considerations to take into account to help determine appropriate BMPs to implement.

The [Pollution Prevention and the MS4 Program](#)⁵ has a list of BMPs and the pollutant(s) they address. If you click on one of the BMPs, it will take you to the section in the document that provides information, including benefits, implementation, maintenance considerations, and typical cost associated with the BMP.

The International Stormwater BMP Database has released its findings on the effectiveness of various BMPs on TSS, phosphorus, metals, and bacteria in its [2012 BMP Performance Summaries](#)⁶ report.

³ http://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Main_Page

⁴ http://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Process_for_selecting_Best_Management_Practices

⁵ <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=11849>

⁶ <http://www.bmpdatabase.org/performance-summaries.html>