



# Virginia Pollution Abatement VPA Permit Requirements

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## Who is Required to Have a VPA Permit?

- Large animal operations that confine 300 animal units or more for feeding, milking, maintaining, etc., in an area that is not covered by any vegetative cover (a bare lot or concrete floor) for a total of 45 days in any 12-month period. Milking is considered confinement. VPA Permits are issued by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to confined animal feeding operations which collect and/or store liquid animal waste.
  - a. 1 animal unit (AU) = 1000 lbs. of live weight, therefore 200 dairy cows are considered equivalent to 300 animal units.
  - b. Farms with 200 or more mature dairy cows and a liquid collection and storage tank are required to have a VPA General Permit. If the farm does not use a liquid waste collection and storage system, it may be covered with an individual VPA Permit.
  - c. In the past, this has referred to mature cows contributing to the liquid waste management system. This definition now also includes dry cows or heifers that are confined, regardless of whether or not they contribute to the liquid waste system.
- DEQ has the authority to require smaller operations to obtain a permit if direct discharge of waste into surface water is documented. There can be no discharge of pollutants into water. This includes milking parlor wastewater and silage leachate.
- **All farms over 300 animal units must be covered by a VPA individual permit or must have applied for a general permit by July 1, 2000, or they will be fined. If a farm you thinks it may need a permit, it should not wait any longer to contact DEQ, the deadline has already passed!**

## Requirements for the VPA Permit Program were Revised in House Bill 991 Passed in 1998

- A registration form describing the types and maximum number of animals to be maintained at the facility.
- A completed DEQ local government ordinance form.
- Copy of nutrient management plan (NMP) approved by Department of Conservation & Recreation and revised every 3 years which addresses manure applications.
- Adequate waste storage. General permit regulation states that: "The liquid manure collection and storage facility shall be designed and operated to (i) prevent point source discharges of pollutants to state waters except in the case of a storm event greater than the 25-year, 24-hour storm, and (ii) provide adequate waste storage capacity to accommodate periods when the ground is frozen or saturated, periods when land application of nutrients should not occur due to limited or non-existent crop nutrient uptake, and periods when physical limitations prohibited the land application of waste."
- Training of the operator is required every three years.
- Annual inspection of the farm's waste storage system, manure application records and application fields.
- Certification that notice of the application for a permit has been sent to adjoining landowners.
- Waste analyzed at least once a year, soil analyzed every 3 years, and groundwater monitoring of earthen storage facilities in certain circumstances.
- Waste management records, including manure and soil analyses and nutrient field application records, must be maintained onsite for five years.

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## Acquiring a Permit

### General Permit

- Must meet requirements stated above.
- Must include a site specific NMP.
- Takes less time to obtain than an individual permit.
- A general permit should be applied for 6 months before the start of construction on a new operation or 6 months prior to expiration of a current permit.

### Individual Permit

- Permit conditions are designed specifically for each operation.
- The permit will last 10 years, as long as the operation does not change or expand.
- May include special requirements such as ground-water monitoring.

Many factors are considered in the permit approval process. These specifications should also be considered when building a new facility or expanding a current one so that all regulations will be abided by.

- Type, size, and location of the facilities.
- Amount of waste expected to be generated.
- How the waste will be stored.
- Where the waste will be applied.

## Nutrient Management Plan

According to general permit regulation, each NMP must contain the following information:

- Site map indicating the location of the waste storage facilities and the fields where waste will be applied.
- Site evaluation and assessment of soil types and potential productivity.

- Soil, water, and waste sampling and monitoring plans.
- Storage and land area requirements.
- Calculation of waste application rates based on the nitrogen needs of the crops.
- Waste application schedules.

## Training

- Every farm operator must complete a Department of Conservation and Recreation training program within 6-12 months of filing for a permit.
- Operators must continue training every 3 years.

## VPA Permit Setbacks

No manure application can occur within:

- 200 feet of occupied dwelling, unless reduced or waived in writing by the occupant.
- 100 feet of well, spring.
- 50 feet of surface water (creek, stream, pond, etc) or 25' if manure is injected.
- 25' of rock outcrop; 50' of limestone outcrops.
- 50 feet from sinkhole. Waste should not be applied so that it would discharge to sinkholes.

## References:

Lawson, L.G. 2000. Guidance Memo No. 00-2005. VPA General Permit Eligibility - Dairy Operations. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Richmond.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. 2000. Confined Animal Feeding Operations. Do I need a permit?