

What to Know if you Are a Contractor in the Rouge River Watershed

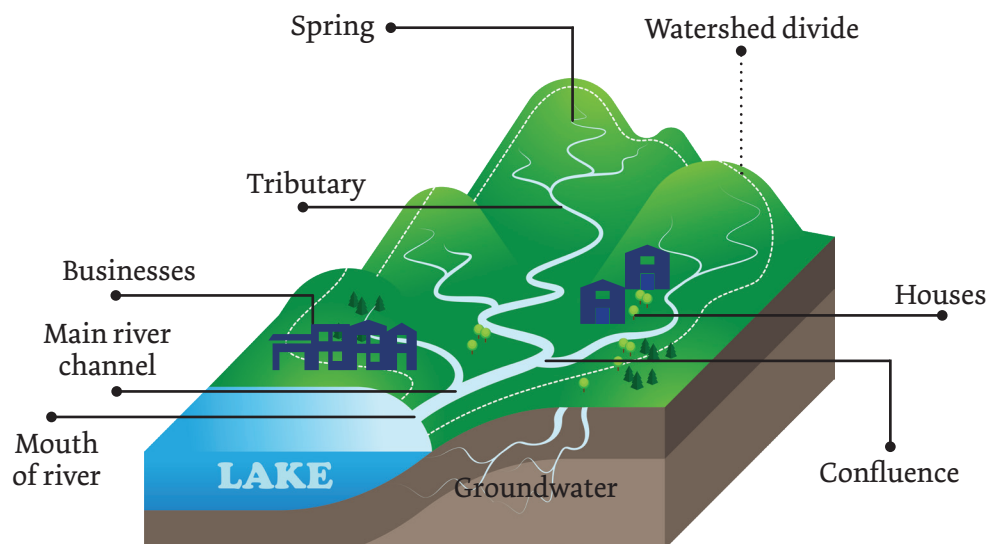
An introduction on permits & best management practices (BMPs) for construction contractors working in the Rouge River Watershed



In Michigan, contractors need to follow specific regulations and BMPs to protect stormwater from construction-related pollution. These requirements are in place to protect the water quality of the Rouge River.

A watershed, also referred to as a drainage basin, is the land area that delivers rain and snow/ice melt to a stream or lake. Every contractor working in Michigan is in a watershed!

When it rains, stormwater flows over a construction site, picking up pollutants like sediment, debris, and chemicals from that loose soil and transport them to nearby storm drains or directly into rivers or lakes. Used water from power washing or carpet cleaning, if discharged to the ground or into a storm drain, can carry chemicals and pollution directly to our rivers and lakes. Even if the work you are contracted to do is not “next to the river,” your actions still have an impact on the water quality in the Rouge River watershed.



As a contractor, securing the correct permits and ensuring stormwater pollution prevention BMPs are in place prior to working will have a positive impact on your profits, employees, customers, the communities you work in, the Rouge River and ultimately one of our Great Lakes - Lake Erie!

Construction Contractors



IMPORTANT: Contact Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the county, and the local authority for complete requirements and regulations as this brochure is an introduction and does not cover all information.

In Michigan, contractors need to adhere to specific regulations and practices to protect stormwater from construction-related pollution. These requirements are primarily aimed at preventing soil erosion and sedimentation, which are major threats to water quality.

Construction activity includes earth-disturbing activities such as clearing, grading, and excavating land and other construction-related activities that could generate pollutants. Construction projects disturbing one acre or more of land, or part of a common plan that will ultimately disturb one acre or more, require a Clean Water Act permit for stormwater discharges.

Enforcement is generally through state, local or county agencies that may have more stringent requirements. Contact the local authority for complete requirements and regulations.

Permits & Plans

- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit:** Construction projects disturbing one acre or more, or part of a larger development disturbing one acre or more, require a NPDES permit for stormwater discharge.
- **Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (SESC) Permit:** Projects disturbing one acre or more, or within 500 feet of a lake or stream, typically require an SESC permit from the local enforcing agency or designated Authorized Public Agency (APA).
- **Permit-by-Rule:** For sites disturbing one to five acres, automatic stormwater coverage may be granted upon obtaining a Part 91 SESC permit, but the contractor must still adhere to Permit-by-Rule requirements. In addition, regular inspection by a Certified Stormwater Operator is required.

- **Notice of Coverage (NOC):** Sites disturbing five acres or more with a point source discharge to surface waters require submitting an NOC to EGLE through their MiEnviro portal. In addition, regular inspections by a Certified Stormwater Operator are required.
- **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan:** A detailed plan outlining the measures to prevent and control erosion and sediment runoff must be developed and implemented before starting on-site activities.
- **Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP):** For industrial activities, including certain construction sites, a SWPPP must be developed.



MORE INFORMATION: Visit allianceofrougecommunities.com/business.html or scan this QR code for more information and links to county and state websites for construction contractors working in the Rouge River Watershed.



Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Construction Contractors



- **Soil Erosion Control:** Implement measures like silt fences, stone check dams, and access drives to prevent soil from leaving the site.
- **Minimizing Disturbance:** Limit disturbed areas and soil compaction, especially in environmentally sensitive zones, by designing with existing topography and protecting natural areas.



- **Low Impact Development (LID):** Consider implementing LID practices such as rain gardens, permeable pavements, and vegetated swales to manage stormwater runoff.

- **Maintaining Vegetated Areas:** Preserve and maintain vegetated areas to help filter pollutants and reduce runoff.
- **Reducing Impervious Surfaces:** Minimize impervious surfaces like asphalt and concrete to increase infiltration and reduce runoff volume.



- **Channel Protection:** Implement controls to minimize impacts on stream channels and ensure they can handle stormwater flow.
- **Permanent Stormwater Controls:** Install permanent post-construction stormwater controls designed to manage the increased runoff from new development and redevelopment projects.

- **Operation & Maintenance Plan:** Develop a plan for the ongoing maintenance of stormwater control measures.
- **Identifying Pollutant Sources:** Identify potential pollutant sources on the site, including materials and activities exposed to stormwater runoff.
- **Spill Prevention and Response:** Implement procedures for spill prevention and response to prevent contaminated runoff.
- **Record Keeping:** Maintain documentation of inspections, permits, and other stormwater management activities.



- **Employee Training:** Provide training to employees on proper stormwater management practices.

Why Implement BMPs on Construction Sites?



Construction activities have a direct effect on the water quality in the Rouge River watershed. Training your employees and following regulations and the BMPs discussed in this brochure will improve the quality of the stormwater runoff on your sites in a cost-effective manner.

Water Quality Terms

As a business and important member of your community, you should understand the frequently used terms below connected to water quality.

- **Non-Point Source** - Businesses in the Rouge River watershed can contribute to poor water quality through “non-point” sources, pollution which occurs when runoff picks up trash and debris on the land and discharges it to a water body.
- **Sanitary Sewer vs. Storm Drain** - Businesses should know the difference between sanitary sewer and storm drain systems. The water in the sanitary sewer comes from the sinks, floor drains and toilets in a business and is treated before being released back into a waterway. While water in the storm drains consists of runoff from rain and snow and sometimes groundwater which is not treated before entering the Rouge River or other waterways. Therefore, any materials and debris on your construction site can damage waterways.

Report Illicit Discharges or Illegal Dumping

An illicit discharge is any discharge containing polluting material, such as sediment, nutrients, oil and bacteria. These discharges can drain to lakes and streams via storm drains. The communities in Southeast Michigan are required to prevent illicit discharges from entering stormwater. It is also important for your employees to report any of the below signs of potential illicit discharges or dumping to a storm drain or water body. These discharges can be reported to your local department of public works or to the State and counties using the numbers below.

Things to Report:

- Discolored water in lakes, rivers and streams.
- Spills and contamination to lakes, rivers and streams.
- Suspicious dumping to catch basins or waterways.
- Unusual discharges from pipes.
- Sewage on the ground or draining to surface water.
- Large number of dead fish in waterways.
- Failing or leaking septic systems.
- Polluted runoff from storage piles or dumpsters to catch basins or waterways.
- Sewage, detergent, chemical, petroleum or rotten egg odors.
- Soil erosion from construction sites.

REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING	
Michigan's Pollution Alert System	800-292-4706
Macomb County	877-679-4337 or IDEP@macombcountymi.gov
Oakland County	248-858-0931
St. Clair County	277-504-SWIM
Washtenaw County	734-222-6860 or https://washtenaw.org/196/Report-an-Issue
Wayne County	888-223-2363

Alliance of Rouge Communities

The Alliance of Rouge Communities, or ARC, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization consisting of local municipalities, counties, educational institutions and stewardship groups working together to improve the Rouge River. Founded in 2005, the ARC is funded by membership dues from local governments and supported by grants. The ARC and its partners work cooperatively to protect the Rouge River while meeting water quality requirements mandated by the State's stormwater permit and restoring beneficial uses, such as canoeing, fishing and other recreational activities, to the Rouge River.