

7:1J-2.7 Claims by responsible parties or by owners or occupants of property from which discharge has emanated

(a) If a person in any way responsible for a discharge which is the subject of the claim, or for any hazardous substance which is the subject of the claim makes a claim in connection with the subject discharge, the claim shall be ineligible for compensation from the Fund unless:

1. The claimant is the owner or operator of a major facility or vessel responsible for the discharge; and
2. The claimant establishes one or more of the defenses provided under N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11g(d).

(b) If, after a discharge occurs, a person purchases or otherwise voluntarily acquires or obtains title to the land from which the discharge emanated, claims by such purchaser in connection with the discharge are ineligible for compensation from the Fund, unless such purchaser can establish to the satisfaction of the Department that the claim satisfies either of the following requirements:

1. Despite exercising reasonable diligence and intelligence before purchasing or otherwise acquiring or obtaining title to the land, the claimant did not discover until after purchasing or otherwise acquiring or obtaining title to the land that any hazardous substance has been discharged or was discharging from the property in question; and, before purchasing or otherwise acquiring or obtaining title to the land, the claimant conducted a diligent and thorough inquiry into previous ownership and uses of the property.
2. The claimant is a government entity and acquired the property by escheat or other involuntary transfer or by operation of law, and not by any affirmative or voluntary act such as exercise of the power of eminent domain. If the government entity acquired or obtained title to the property by an affirmative or voluntary act, the standard set forth in (b)1 above shall govern eligibility of the government entity's claim.

Case Notes

Although owner did not own property when it was leased to polluter, and thus had no capacity or obligation to exercise her authority as lessor to prevent or end pollution, if she failed to take preventative or remedial action when she knew or should have known of discharge, that failure would constitute "intentional or unintentional act or omission," rendering her ineligible for reimbursement of cleanup costs under Spill Compensation and Control Act. *Marsh v. New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund and Environmental Claims Admin.*, 286 N.J.Super. 620, 670 A.2d 67 (A.D.1996).

Donee's right to recover from Spill Compensation Fund no greater than donor's; Spill Act does not permit property owner who has profited by contaminating or permitting contamination of property to obtain public financing for cleaning up pollution by expedient of making gift. *Marsh v. New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund and Environmental Claims Admin.*, 286 N.J.Super. 620, 670 A.2d 67 (A.D. 1996).

Donee's right to recover reimbursement from Spill Compensation Fund is no greater than donor's; Spill Act does not permit property

owner who has profited by contaminating or permitting contamination of property to obtain public Marsh v. New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund and Environmental Claims Admin., 286 N.J.Super. 620, 670 A.2d 67 (A.D.1996).

Property owner was strictly liable for clean-up of termiticide applied to property by private contractor hired by owner. *Bonilla v. Department of Environmental Protection*, 96 N.J.A.R.2d (EPE) 75.

Property purchaser's lack of diligence in investigating known oil spills precludes recovery of remediation costs. *Newhan Properties and Management Corp. v. Spill Compensation Fund*, 96 N.J.A.R.2d (EPE) 41.

Lack of due diligence following conversion from oil to gas precluded owners from obtaining compensation for discharge from leaking oil tank. *Katz v. Spill Compensation Fund and Blackford*, 95 N.J.A.R.2d (EPE) 240.

Landowner precluded from relief under Spill Fund. *Marsh v. Department of Environmental Protection*, 94 N.J.A.R.2d (EPE) 231.

Landowner's claim for reimbursement for cleanup of contaminated property was denied. *Pitman Art Supply Co., Inc. v. Department of Environmental Protection*, 94 N.J.A.R.2d (EPE) 225.

7:1J-2.8 Administrative closure of claims

(a) The administrator may, in his or her discretion, administratively close any claim for which the claimant has:

1. Failed to take actions required by this chapter within 60 days after the claimant was required to take such action; or
2. Failed to respond to a request for information by the Department within the time period set forth in the request.

(b) Administrative closure of a claim is without prejudice. The claimant may reactivate the claim by rectifying the failure under (a)1 or 2 above and making a written request to the Department for reactivation within six months of receiving notice of administrative closure from the Department.

(c) Before closing a claim under (a) above, the administrator shall send the claimant written notice of the administrator's intent to administratively close the claim. The administrator shall state in the written notice the reason for the administrative closure, and the procedure to avoid administrative closure under (d) below.

(d) The administrator shall administratively close the claim unless:

1. Within 30 days after the claimant's receipt of the notice described in (c) above, the claimant has submitted to the Department an affidavit explaining why the claim should not be administratively closed (which affidavit may include an explanation of why the time allotted to take action or provide information was insufficient); and
2. The administrator determines that the affidavit provides an adequate explanation of why the claim should not be administratively closed.

Amended by R.1998 d.67, effective January 20, 1998.
See: 29 N.J.R. 4365(a), 29 N.J.R. 4594(a), 30 N.J.R. 336(b).

In (b), added a six month time limit to reactivate a claim.

Amended by R.1998 d.67, effective January 20, 1998.
See: 29 N.J.R. 4365(a), 29 N.J.R. 4594(a), 30 N.J.R. 336(b).

SUBCHAPTER 3. WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS CLAIMS

7:1J-3.1 Eligibility of water supply systems claims for compensation

(a) Water Supply Systems Claims (WSSCs) are eligible for compensation from the Fund only in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, and only to the extent permitted under this subchapter.

(b) If the Department determines that as a result of a discharge, a water purveyor's existing supply of water is or will become unsuitable to serve the needs of the water purveyor's existing customers, the water purveyor may make a WSSC for the cost of replacing or treating the existing water supply. No portion of such a WSSC which represents costs beyond those necessary to replace or treat the existing water supply is eligible for compensation from the Fund. Such a WSSC is eligible for compensation from the Fund only in accordance with those requirements of this chapter which are listed at (b)1 through 8 below, and only to the extent permitted under such listed requirements.

1. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.1(b);
2. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.2;
3. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.3;
4. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.5(c) and (d);
5. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.6;
6. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.7;
7. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.8; and
8. N.J.A.C. 7:1J-3.9.

7:1J-3.2 Spill Fund claims area

(a) To be compensable from the Fund, costs expanded by a claimant in connection with a WSSC shall be either:

1. Directly associated with damages to natural resources located within the Spill Fund Claims Area (SFCA), if the Department has delineated an SFCA;
2. Directly associated with supplying potable water to real property in an area within or outside the SFCA for which the Department has determined, pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water regulations set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:10, that the existing source of potable water is unsuitable for human consumption due to a discharge; or
3. Directly associated with damages to natural resources resulting from a discharge, notwithstanding whether the Department has delineated an SFCA.

7:1J-3.3 Most cost-effective environmentally sound alternative

(a) A WSSC shall be eligible for compensation from the Fund only if the WSSC is for costs associated with remedial actions which the Department has determined to be an environmentally sound means of ameliorating the damages resulting from a discharge.

(b) A WSSC shall be eligible for compensation from the Fund only to the extent of the cost (as such cost is determined by the Department) of the most cost-effective means which the Department has determined to be an environmentally sound means of ameliorating the damages resulting from a discharge. To determine what remedy is the most cost-effective, for each alternative the Department will consider initial capital costs, 20-year operation and maintenance costs, monitoring costs, reliability, feasibility of implementation, and acceptability to the public.

(c) The Department may evaluate alternatives as well as any new technologies, to determine whether any other environmentally sound means of ameliorating the damages resulting from a discharge are more cost-effective than the remedial actions for which the claim has been made. Such alternatives may include, without limitation, the following (or any combination thereof):

1. Filtration of water supply at point of entry;
2. Extension of existing water lines;
3. Drilling of deeper wells for individual residences;
4. Provision of interim alternative water supplies, such as bottled water or waterbuffaloes;
5. Containment of discharge and treatment of water supply;
6. Stand-alone satellite water supply systems/installation of production wells;
7. Contaminant removal;
8. No remedial action;
9. Drilling new wells;
10. Treatment of the contaminated water supply, by methods such as air stripping or filtration; and/or
11. Any other remediation in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:26E.

Amended by R.1998 d.67, effective January 20, 1998.
See: 29 N.J.R. 4365(a), 29 N.J.R. 4594(a), 30 N.J.R. 336(b).
Added new (c)11.