

(e) The person responsible for conducting the remediation shall provide to the Department all appropriate information as detailed in this section when applying for an extension of a regulatory, mandatory, or expedited site specific timeframe, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-3.

(f) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to relieve any person conducting the remediation of that person's obligations to conduct remediation at any portion of a site or area of concern to which the person has access.

SUBCHAPTER 9. ENFORCEMENT

7:26C-9.1 Scope

(a) This subchapter governs administrative enforcement actions the Department may take for a person's violation of any of the following:

1. An administrative order issued pursuant to any of the Department's statutory authorities;
2. An administrative consent order;
3. The Industrial Site Recovery Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1K-6 et seq., including any of the following:
 - i. The Industrial Site Recovery Act Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:26B; and
 - ii. A remediation agreement issued pursuant to the Industrial Site Recovery Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1K-6 et seq., and the Industrial Site Recovery Act Rules, at N.J.A.C. 7:26B-4;
4. The Site Remediation Reform Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10C-1 et seq., and this chapter;
5. The Underground Storage of Hazardous Substances Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10A-21 et seq., and the Underground Storage Tanks rules, specifically N.J.A.C. 7:14B-1.3, and 7 through 14;
6. The Discharges of Petroleum and Other Hazardous Substances rules, specifically N.J.A.C. 7:1E-5; or
7. A remedial action permit issued pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-7.

(b) This subchapter:

1. Identifies those violations where a grace period will be afforded;
2. Establishes base penalty amounts and penalty calculation procedures for non-minor violations and minor violations not corrected within the grace period;
3. Governs the procedures the Department will follow when it issues an administrative order;

4. Governs the procedures for requesting an adjudicatory hearing on an administrative order and a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment that the Department may issue pursuant to this subchapter; and

5. Identifies responses required to a directive the Department issues pursuant to the Spill Compensation and Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11f.

7:26C-9.2 Applicability

(a) Each violation of an administrative order, an administrative consent order, a remediation agreement, a rule, or a remedial action permit constitutes an additional, separate, and distinct offense, and each penalty payment constitutes a payment of civil or civil administrative penalties pursuant to the Spill Compensation and Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 through 23.14.

(b) Each day during which a violation continues constitutes an additional, separate, and distinct offense.

(c) Neither the assessment of a civil administrative penalty nor the payment of any such civil administrative penalty shall be deemed to affect the availability of any other enforcement provision provided for by any other statute or rule in connection with the violation for which the assessment is levied.

(d) Any party to an Administrative Consent Order or a Remediation Agreement that includes stipulated penalty provisions may request in writing that the Department amend its document to replace the stipulated penalty provisions with language deferring to the penalty provisions in N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9. The Department may, in its discretion, agree to modify the Administrative Consent Order or Remediation Agreement.

7:26C-9.3 Administrative orders

(a) Whenever the person responsible for conducting the remediation fails to comply with any statute, administrative order, administrative consent order, remediation agreement, remediation certification, rule, remedial action permit, or guidance the Department may issue an administrative order that:

1. Specifies the provision or provisions of any statute, administrative order, administrative consent order, remediation agreement, remediation certification, rule, remedial permit or guidance of which that person is in violation;
2. Cites the action or omission that caused the violation;
3. Requires compliance with such provision or provisions; and
4. Gives notice to that person of a right to an administrative hearing to contest a notice of an administrative order issued pursuant to this subchapter.

7:26C-9.4 Grace period applicability; procedures

(a) Each violation identified in the penalty table at (c) below by an "M" in the Type of Violation column, for which conditions at (c) below are satisfied, is a minor violation and is subject to a grace period, the length of which is indicated in the column with the heading "Grace Period."

(b) Each violation identified in the penalty table at (c) below by an "NM" in the Type of Violation column is a non-minor violation and is not subject to a grace period.

(c) The Department shall provide a grace period for any violation identified as minor under this section, provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The violation is not the result of the purposeful, knowing, reckless or criminally negligent conduct of the person responsible for the violation;
2. The activity or condition constituting the violation has existed for less than 12 months prior to the date of discovery by the Department;
3. The person responsible for the violation has not been identified in a previous enforcement action by the Department as responsible for a violation of the same requirement within the preceding 12-month period; and
4. The person responsible for the violation has not been identified by the Department as responsible for the same or substantially similar violations at any time that reasonably indicates a pattern of illegal conduct and not isolated incidents on the part of the person responsible.

(d) For a violation determined to be minor under (c) above, the following provisions apply:

1. The Department will issue a notice of violation to the person responsible for a minor violation that:
 - i. Identifies the condition or activity that constitutes the violation and the specific statutory and regulatory provision or other requirement violated; and
 - ii. Specifies that a penalty may be imposed unless the minor violation is corrected and compliance is achieved within the specified grace period.
2. If the person responsible for the minor violation corrects that violation and demonstrates, in accordance with (d)3 below, that compliance has been achieved within the specified grace period, the Department shall not impose a penalty for the violation and in addition, shall not consider the minor violation as an offense pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.2(b).
3. The person responsible for a violation shall submit to the Department, at the address indicated in the notice of violation, before the end of the specified grace period, written information, certified in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:26C-1.5(b)1, and signed by the person responsible for

conducting the remediation, detailing the corrective action taken or compliance achieved.

4. If the person responsible for the minor violation seeks additional time beyond the specified grace period to achieve compliance, the person shall request an extension of the specified grace period. The request shall be made in writing, certified in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:26C-1.5, no later than one week before the end of the specified grace period and shall include the anticipated time needed to achieve compliance, the specific cause or causes of the delay, and any measures taken or to be taken to minimize the time needed to achieve compliance. If the person is unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, the person may still request the extension, which request shall explain the reason for the delay in requesting the extension. The Department may, at its discretion, approve in writing an extension, which shall not exceed 90 days, to accommodate the anticipated delay in achieving compliance. In exercising its discretion to approve a request for an extension, the Department may consider the following:

- i. Whether the violator has taken reasonable measures to achieve compliance in a timely manner;
- ii. Whether the delay has been caused by circumstances beyond the control of the violator;
- iii. Whether the delay will pose an additional risk to the public health, safety and the environment; and
- iv. Whether the delay will materially or substantially undermine or impair the goals of the regulatory program.

5. If the person responsible for the minor violation fails to demonstrate to the Department that the violation has been corrected and compliance achieved within the specified grace period, or within the approved extension, if any, the Department may, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, impose a penalty that is retroactive to the date the notice of violation was issued pursuant to (d)1 above.

6. The person responsible for a minor violation shall not request more than one extension of a grace period specified in a notice of violation.

7:26C-9.5 Civil administrative penalty determination

(a) The amount of a civil administrative penalty shall be determined as follows:

1. The Department shall identify the violation listed in the table in (c) below;
2. The Department shall determine whether the violation is identified by an "M" or "NM" in the Type of violation column;
3. For a violation identified by an "M" as minor in the "Type of Violation" column, the Department shall apply the provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.4; and

2. For all other conduct, the civil administrative penalty, per act or omission, shall be in the amount of up to \$1,000 for the first offense, up to \$2,000 for the second offense and up to \$5,000 for the third and each subsequent offense.

(d) A violation under this section is non-minor and therefore is not subject to a grace period.

7:26C-9.8 Civil administrative penalty for economic benefit

(a) When the Department determines that the violator has gained an economic benefit from a violation, the Department shall, in addition to any other civil administrative penalty assessed pursuant to this subchapter, include as part of a civil administrative penalty the economic benefit (in dollars) which the violator has realized as a result of not complying, or by delaying compliance, with any applicable requirements.

(b) The Department shall include the following dollar amounts in its calculation of economic benefit:

1. The amount of savings realized from avoided capital or noncapital costs resulting from the violation;
2. The return earned or that may be earned on the amount of the avoided costs;
3. All benefits accruing to the violator as a result of a competitive market advantage enjoyed by reason of the violation; and
4. All other benefits resulting from the violation.

(c) The Department shall consider the following factors in determining economic benefit:

1. The amount of capital investments required, and whether they are one-time or recurring;
2. The amount of one-time nondepreciable expenditures;
3. The amount of annual expenses;
4. The useful life of capital;
5. Applicable tax, inflation and discount rates;
6. The amount of low interest financing, the low interest rate, and the corporate debt rate; and
7. Any other factors relevant to economic benefit.

(d) If the total economic benefit was derived from more than one violation, the Department may apportion the total economic benefit amount among the violations from which it was derived so as to increase each civil administrative penalty assessment to an amount no greater than \$50,000 per violation.

7:26C-9.9 Procedures for assessment and payment of civil administrative penalties

(a) In order to assess a civil administrative penalty for violations listed in N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.1(a), the Department shall, by means of a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment, notify the violator by certified mail (return receipt requested) or by personal service. The Department may, in its discretion, assess a civil administrative penalty for more than one offense in a single notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or in multiple notices of civil administrative penalty assessment. In each notice of civil administrative penalty assessment the Department shall:

1. Identify the provision violated;
2. Concisely state the facts which constitute the violation;
3. Order such violation to cease;
4. Specify the amount of the civil administrative penalty assessed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.5; and
5. Advise the violator of the right to request an adjudicatory hearing pursuant to the procedure in N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.6.

(b) Payment of the civil administrative penalty is due upon receipt by the violator of the Department's final order in a contested case or when a notice of civil administrative penalty becomes a final order, as follows:

1. If no hearing is requested pursuant to the procedures in N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.10, a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment becomes a final order on the 21st calendar day following receipt by the violator;
2. If the Department denies the hearing request pursuant to the standards in the Administrative Procedure Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment becomes a final order upon receipt by the violator of such denial; or
3. If an adjudicatory hearing is conducted, a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment becomes a final order upon receipt by the violator of a final order in a contested case.

(c) If the violator does not pay a civil administrative penalty within 30 calendar days after the date of a final order, and the penalty is not contested pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.6, or if the violator does not make a required payment pursuant to a payment schedule entered into with the Department, an interest charge shall accrue on the amount of the penalty from the 30th calendar day that amount was due and owing and continue until the violator pays the penalty in full.

(d) If a civil administrative penalty is appealed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-9.10 and the amount of the penalty is upheld, in whole or in part, interest shall be calculated on that amount as of the 30th calendar day from the date the amount was due

and owing and continue until the violator pays the penalty in full.

(e) The rate of interest charged on any late penalty shall be that established by the New Jersey Supreme Court for interest rates on judgments, as set forth in the Rules Governing the Courts of the State of New Jersey.

(f) The Department may assess and recover, by civil administrative order, the reasonable cost of preparing and successfully enforcing a civil administrative penalty. The assessment may be recovered at the same time as a civil administrative penalty, in addition to the penalty assessment.

7:26C-9.10 Procedures for requesting and conducting adjudicatory hearings

(a) To request an adjudicatory hearing to contest a notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or an administrative order assessed or issued pursuant to this chapter, the violator shall submit an original request in writing to the Department at the address in (d) below, within 20 calendar days after the violator's receipt of the notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or an administrative order. The violator shall include the following information in each hearing request:

1. The name, address, and telephone number, and if available, the fax number and email address, of the violator and its authorized representative;

2. The date the violator received the notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or administrative order being contested;

3. A copy of the notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or an administrative order and a list of all issues being appealed;

4. The violator's defenses to each of the Department's findings of fact in the notice of civil administrative penalty assessment or administrative order stated in short and plain terms;

5. An admission or denial of each of the Department's findings of fact in the notice of administrative penalty assessment or administrative order. If the violator is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of a finding, the violator shall so state and this shall have the effect of a denial. A denial shall fairly meet the substance of the findings denied. When the violator intends in good faith to deny only a part or a qualification of a finding, the violator shall specify so much of it as is true and material and deny only the remainder. The violator may not generally deny all of the findings, but shall make all denials as specific denials of designated findings. For each finding the violator denies, the violator shall state the fact or facts as the violator believes it or them to be;

6. Information supporting the request and specific reference to or copies of other written documents relied upon to support the request;

7. An estimate of the time required for the hearing (in days and/or hours); and

8. A request, if necessary, for a barrier-free hearing location for physically disabled persons.

(b) The Department shall deny the hearing request if:

1. The violator fails to include all the information required by (a) above; or

2. The Department does not receive the request within 20 calendar days after the violator received the enforcement document being contested.

(c) The Department shall conduct all adjudicatory hearings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the Uniform Administrative Procedure Rules, N.J.A.C. 1:1.

(d) The violator shall send the request for an adjudicatory hearing to:

1. The Office of Legal Affairs
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
PO Box 402
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402
Attention: Hearing Request; and
2. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Enforcement and Investigations
PO Box 028
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0028
Attention: Hearing Request

Administrative correction.
See: 42 N.J.R. 1862(a).

7:26C-9.11 Spill Compensation and Control Act directive

(a) A Spill Compensation and Control Act directive is a clear, written notice that the Department has determined that it is necessary to cleanup and remove discharges, and that notifies the respondents that the Department believes them to be responsible for the hazardous substances that were discharged.

(b) Pursuant to the Spill Compensation and Control Act, the Department may direct persons who are in any way responsible for a hazardous substance at a site to:

1. Clean up and remove the discharge or threatened discharge of a hazardous substance, including the actual removal of the contamination or measures designed to prevent or mitigate risk to the public health and safety and the environment; or

2. Arrange for the cleanup and removal, including funding the Department's cleanup and removal costs, or any other indirect arrangement the Department approves in the exercise of its enforcement discretion.

(c) To the extent possible, the Department will provide in the directive general notice as to:

1. The location of the discharge or threatened discharge;
2. The identity of those responsible parties receiving the directive;
3. The connection of each such responsible party to the hazardous substances at the site;
4. The scope of the necessary remediation or the estimated remediation costs;
5. The actions that the responsible parties are directed to take;
6. The manner and timetable for the undertaking action pursuant to the directive; and
7. The identification of a period in which the responsible parties may respond to the directive.

(d) The Department may issue a notice to an insurer or any other person the Department believes may have financial responsibility for a hazardous substance at the site.

(e) Prior to the expiration of the time for a response contained in the directive, the Department will be available to discuss the directive upon receipt of a written request from a responsible party to the Department's contact person designated in the directive.

(f) The responsible party shall communicate its selection of one of the following responses to the directive in writing to the Department's contact person identified in the directive within the time period set forth in the directive.

1. If the responsible party decides to comply with the directive, the directive recipient shall respond in accordance with the specific instructions contained within the directive.
2. If the responsible party decides not to comply with the directive, but decides to pay for certain portions of the remediation specified in the directive, the responsible party shall make such payment in mitigation of any liability that it may possess and comply with (g) below; however, the Department may refuse any payment made pursuant to this paragraph if there are any conditions attached to that payment.
3. If the responsible party decides not to comply with the directive, the directive recipient shall comply with (g) below, indicating in writing that it chooses not to take any actions to comply with the directive.

(g) If the responsible party chooses to pay in mitigation of its liability under a directive or not to comply with a directive, the responsible party shall submit a written response to the Department according to the requirements in the directive. The responsible party shall include in the response a detailed

explanation of the person's reasons for its decision, including all good cause defenses to the directive.

Administrative correction.
See: 42 N.J.R. 1862(a).

SUBCHAPTER 10. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

7:26C-10.1 Scope

(a) This subchapter contains provisions that:

1. Establish the eligibility requirements for technical assistance grants, at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.3;
2. Establish the pre-application requirements for a technical assistance grant, at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.4;
3. Establish the application requirements for a technical assistance grant, at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.5;
4. Establish the eligible technical assistance grant activities, at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.6; and
5. Establish the reporting requirements for a community group receiving a technical assistance grant, at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.7.

7:26C-10.2 General requirements

(a) The Department shall award a technical assistance grant in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 per remediation phase for each of the following phases of remediation:

1. The remedial investigation phase; and
2. The remedial action phase.

(b) The money awarded in a technical assistance grant shall be used for the limited purposes of hiring a licensed site remediation professional to support and advise a grant recipient concerning the technical assistance grant activities described at N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.6(b).

(c) The Department shall not award a technical assistance grant to more than one community group at any one time for any contaminated site.

(d) The Department may provide reimbursement to any community group for costs incurred pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-10.4(d).

7:26C-10.3 Eligibility

(a) A community group is eligible for a technical assistance grant if it meets the following criteria:

1. One or more members of the community group lives near the site;
2. No member of the community group is associated with any person responsible for conducting the remediation of the site;

3. No person responsible for conducting the remediation of the site established or is currently supporting the community group;

4. The community group must not be affiliated with a national organization;

5. The community group is not an academic institution;

6. The community group does not consist of a political subdivision (example: township or municipality);

7. The community group is incorporated or in the process of incorporating;

8. The community group must be:

i. A non-profit organization pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. §501(c)3;

ii. In the process of obtaining status pursuant to 26 U.S.C. §501(c)3 status; or

iii. Be affiliated with a local organization that has obtained status under 26 U.S.C. §501(c)3 as a non-profit organization for the specific purpose of representing the community;

9. The community group must have established procedures for recordkeeping and financial accounting in managing the technical assistance grant; and

10. The community group must have a commercial bank account in the name of the community group or the name of the 501(c)3 organization with which the community group has affiliated.

7:26C-10.4 Pre-application process

(a) A community group may request that the Department make a finding of substantial public interest in a particular contaminated site, as a condition of seeking a technical assistance grant, by submitting to the Department a petition containing the signatures of 25 or more people who live or work near the site.

(b) The Department will respond to a petition and inform the community group of whether or not it has met the requirements of a substantial public interest.

(c) Within 30 days after receiving the Department's response, the community group shall submit to the Department's Office of Community Relations a Letter of Intent that includes the following information:

1. The name of the community group;
2. A description of the composition of the group;
3. A statement of the group's intent to apply for a technical assistance grant;
4. The program interest name and program interest number (preferred ID) of the contaminated site for which the group is seeking the grant; and

5. The name and address of a contact person for the group and his or her daytime phone number.

(d) Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent, the community group will publish a public notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the vicinity of the contaminated site which includes the following information:

1. The program interest name and program interest number (preferred ID) of the contaminated site for which the group is seeking a technical assistance grant;

2. A statement that the community group has submitted a Letter of Intent to the Department as part of the process to acquire a technical assistance grant for the contaminated site;

3. The name of the community group, seeking the technical assistance grant, and its contact; and

4. A statement that any other community groups interested in a technical assistance grant for the same contaminated site has 30 days after the publication of the notice in the newspaper to submit its own Letter of Intent to the Department.

(e) If the Department does not receive an additional Letter of Intent within the prescribed time period, the Department will advise the community group in writing that it has 60 days to file an application for a technical assistance grant pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26E-10.5.

(f) If the Department receives additional Letters of Intent, all community groups filing letters will have an additional 30 days from the publication of the public notice to attempt to form a coalition. The Department's website at www.nj.gov/dep/srp/srra/community/ provides guidance about the coalition process.

(g) If multiple community groups apply for a grant for the same site and phase and no coalition is formed, the Department will not award a grant.

Case Notes

Where respondents failed to immediately mitigate vapor and groundwater hazards down-gradient at a nearby property, and failed to perform proper remedial investigations, most particularly by not delineating the horizontal and vertical extent of groundwater contamination, respondents' liability was clear; contrary to respondents' allegations, the penalty was not duplicative where one penalty was for failing to immediately mitigate the effects of a discharge on a specific neighbor and the other was for delaying the remedial investigation of all potential impacts (adopting 2007 N.J. AGEN LEXIS 149). N.J. Dep't of Env'tl. Prot. v. Foster, OAL Dkt. No. EHW 83-06, 2007 N.J. AGEN LEXIS 505, Final Decision (May 4, 2007).

7:26C-10.5 Application for technical assistance grant

(a) An applicant for a technical assistance grant shall submit an application, on a Technical Assistance Grant Form available from the Department at www.nj.gov/dep/srp/srra/community/, which includes the following information:

1. A description of the community group, including: