



SOME ADVICE REGARDING THE SEWAGE POLLUTION RIGHT TO KNOW (SPRTK) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Steven Grimm | Wastewater Technician

It's been several months now since the NY-Alert system for reporting overflows went into effect. It's been an interesting time to say the least. As with any computer/internet based program, there were some problems. These problems ranged from facilities not registering or knowing they needed to register, difficulties in creating an account and uncertainty in knowing when and what to report. DEC conducted some training around the state as well as posting an instructional video on their website, although in my conversations with operational specialists and some elected officials around the state, not nearly enough was offered. There is still confusion, especially amongst the smaller municipalities and the Publically Owned Sewer Systems (POSS). In my travels, I have given advice to systems regarding reporting and I would like to share that advice here.

First and foremost, all municipal systems and POSS's are required to register. It doesn't matter that you may never have had an overflow. You need to register. POSS's, or municipalities that have only a collection system and send the collected waste water to another municipality for treatment, are not exempt. If you have not yet done so, please register. If you have questions contact DEC or NYRWA.

Don't wait until you have a reportable event to create an

account. The most common problem encountered has been in creating an account. The login information supplied does not always work. You can save yourself some frustration and anger if you create your account now. If you are having trouble setting up your account, don't just give up. Contact DEC at the number given on the registration confirmation letter and keep trying until you get it. Believe me; you don't need the added aggravation when dealing with an overflow.

What constitutes an overflow? Is it anything that breaks the plane of a manhole or tank? Is there a specific volume that once surpassed is reported? Does the overflow need to reach surface water in order to be reported? My advice on this one is simple. Report any overflow, regardless of volume or location. You never know who is watching. Better safe than sorry.

That last paragraph leads me to my final and probably most important piece of advice. Be careful what you put in the report. The form is mostly check boxes but there are sections that require additional information. Remember that the information you provide gets posted to a public website. There have been incidents where the media has not accurately reported on an event. Do yourself a favor and heed my advice and that of Joe Friday from Dragnet, "Just the facts ma'am". 💧💧💧