

Snow Dumps

What You Didn't Realize You Need to Know

Each year, it comes as a shock to one or more towns in Maine that the DEP has regulations concerning snow dumps. Chapter 573, "Snow Dumps: Best Management Practices for Pollution Prevention," (2012 version) explains the do's and don'ts of locating and maintaining a snow dump and when a waste discharge license is needed from DEP. Chapter 573 can be found here:

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/06/chaps06.htm>

License Needed

A waste discharge license is needed for:

- Discharges of snow removed from public or private ways or parking lots directly into estuarine and marine waters,
- Discharges of meltwater to ground water from snow dumps that are located wholly or partially within a significant sand and gravel aquifer,
- Discharges of meltwater to waters of the State from snow dumps that do not meet the minimum water body setbacks and BMPs for pollution prevention established in sections 5 and 6 of the rule, and
- Discharges of meltwater to waters of the State from snow dumps that comply with the setbacks and BMPs established in section 5 and 6 but that discharge pollutants to waters of the State or cause a violation of applicable state water quality standards, as provided in section 7.

The DEP does not consider incidental discharges from on-site plowing, pushing, or blowing snow, such as bridges or parking lots that abut the water, to be a snow dump that requires a permit. For example, snow entering a river or stream as the result of plowing a bridge does not need a license.

The BIG NO-NO: By law, it is illegal to dump snow directly into fresh surface waters of the state.

The Department will NOT issue a waste discharge license for this activity.