

900-J Seafood Processing Permit



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

What is happening?

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has been working to update the 900-J Seafood Processor Permit. DEQ needs to adapt its permit coverage to respond to changes in industry practices and water quality to ensure facilities are meeting state and federal requirements.

A draft of the updated 900-J permit was put out for public comment in 2018. DEQ considered the comments submitted along with the regulatory objectives of updating the permit to be protective of human health and the environment. Based on the comments DEQ received on the draft 900-J permit in 2018, DEQ revised the permit and opened an additional comment period in 2019. On Oct. 1, 2020, DEQ will issue the updated 900-J permit project.

What does the 900-J permit do?

Seafood processing facilities are the places where freshly caught seafood is cleaned, butchered and packaged. This can include a range of facilities from campgrounds and boat ramps with fish cleaning stations to large-scale seafood packaging plants.

The 900-J permit regulates wastewater discharges for most seafood processing facilities in Oregon. Wastewater means the water that is used in the process of butchering the fish, and is treated and then release back into Oregon's waterways. Wastewater from seafood processing operations can contain pollutants such as organic material, bacteria and ammonia that can be harmful to aquatic life.

The 900-J permit also covers stormwater that comes in contact with the seafood processing operations. This can happen when it rains on outdoor facilities and the rain carries pollutants from the seafood processing into the storm drain. Under the 900-J permit, this water must be treated along with wastewater before it is released into the waterways.

The majority of the processing facilities are located in coastal Oregon communities or along major rivers close to the ocean. This updated permit will more effectively protect Oregon's waters for fishing, swimming, shellfish production and other uses.



Workers packaging seafood in a seafood processing workshop.

How will seafood processors apply for the updated 900-J permit?

Now that DEQ has issued the 900-J permit, all seafood processors will need to come into compliance with that permit. Seafood processors will have until October 2021 to submit a complete application to DEQ.

There are two types of 900-J permits: the general and the individual permit. General permits are intended for businesses that produce small, consistent wastewater discharges. Individual permits are for facilities with unique or complex operations, where DEQ will need to tailor permit requirements to the specific needs of the facility and local waterways. In cases where a facility is not eligible for coverage under the general permit, or the facility is unable to comply with the permit conditions, DEQ may direct facilities to apply for individual permit coverage.

How can I get more information?

You can learn more about the 900-J permit online at <http://ordeq.org/900j>. On this webpage you can find a copy of the permit and the Permit Evaluation Report, which explains the permit in detail. If you would like to ask a question, you can reach out to Tim McFetridge at (503) 378-4995 or Tim.Mcfetridge@deq.state.or.us.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

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