

Success Story

Helping Small Wastewater Treatment Plants Achieve Compliance

Challenge

Some smaller wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) throughout Ohio are challenged to stay in compliance with their wastewater discharge permits, because of aging equipment or facilities and retaining knowledgeable and trained operators. To help these small systems achieve and maintain compliance, Ohio EPA initiated a customized training and outreach program for small system operators in Ohio.

Solution

Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA), Division of Surface Water and Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) partnered to create and implement Ohio EPA's Package Plant Initiative. Under this initiative, six workshops were offered across Ohio beginning in 2015. The workshops trained operators on better process controls, including the use of low-cost tools and equipment to determine and maintain compliance.

In addition to classroom and on-site training, each participating WWTP system also received a basic testing supplies kit and a comprehensive process control manual at no cost. Through the program, five Process Tools Libraries were established, one at each Ohio EPA district office. Through these libraries, participating WWTP operators can borrow equipment such as a dissolved oxygen meter and a centrifuge to use in their process control efforts. Operators were also given the opportunity to join an ongoing online forum to share lessons learned, assist each other and ask questions of process control experts at Ohio EPA.

A total of 288 attendees, representing more than 200 small WWTPs participated in the statewide workshops. As a result of these efforts, the agency is seeing improved operations and compliance at many plants participating in the initiative.

Resources

This statewide initiative to assist the small WWTP operators is an example of how Ohio EPA is helping small community systems achieve compliance and operate more efficiently. In addition, DEFA's Compliance Assistance Unit has organized many other workshops and conducts on-site assessments to help WWTP operators maintain compliance. For more information about Ohio EPA's Package Plant Initiative, visit epa.ohio.gov/defa/PackagePlantInitiative.aspx.



Jon VanDommelen of DEFA's Compliance Assistance Unit talks with plant operators during a training session.

Project Specifics

Location

Statewide

Details

Six workshops to assist operators of small WWTPs with better process controls leading towards environmental compliance.

Cost

A \$250,000 grant from the OWDA. All workshops and tools were provided to the participants at no cost.

Environmental Impacts

Operating more WWTPs in compliance with permits keeps pollutants out of Ohio's streams and water bodies and protects human health and the environment.

Economic Impacts

The free training and resources will help a community reduce their operations and maintenance costs as well as costs associated with non-compliance such as penalties and legal fees.