

Video transcript: Instructions on how to report sewage discharges using NY-Alert

Hello. Welcome to this training video. This video is a step by step guide to enter sewage discharges from Publically Owned Treatment Works and Publically Owned Sewer Systems that are covered under the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act into NY-ALERT.

Slide change

In your browser, enter the URL for the NY-Alert notifier page:

<https://login.nyalert.gov/AllHazardlogin.aspx>

Enter your user name and password and then click the “Other Tasks” radio button if it is not already marked.

Pause while typing User Name and Password

Click “Group Notifications” on the left side if you are not already taken to that page after logging in. On the Group-Based Notifications page, choose “New DEC Notification” and a smart form Wizard will appear.

Brief pause while changing screens

In Step 1, using the drop down arrow, choose the facility that you are entering the data for. These are specific to you, the notifier. Make sure that the radio button for “Normal” is filled in. In the distribution channels box, ensure the boxes for Email, mass dialer, SMS (priority-NYALRT), Post to Private Civilians Portal, and Post to Organization-Based RSS Feeds are checked. Under the 2 hour and 4 hour groups, click on the check boxes to notify both the 2 hour and 4 hour notification groups.

Brief pause while checking boxes

In the “Selected Address of Discharge”, enter the closest street address to the location of the discharge. Enter the street number and street name, enter the City name, then NY.

Brief pause while typing

The term in red, Not Geocoded turns to the green Geocoded, when the address is properly located. Please make sure that green Geocoded is showing before continuing. If the green Geocoded does not appear after typing in the address, click “Map It”. You may also click “Map It” if Geocoded turns to green, which allows you for entering a very specific location.

Show Map It function example while reading

The “Map It” feature will bring up a map of the state with a pinpoint balloon on the location of the address that you entered. Using the map tools, you can zoom in on the location surrounding the pinpoint. You can use the “Satellite” button to view the location in real imaging. If the discharge is occurring at a manhole, you may even be able to view the manhole on the map. Place and click your cursor on the exact spot where the discharge is occurring. Once you have settled on the location on the map, click the “Submit” button. Due to the Google map features, a range for the street number may be chosen for the location. For this example, the system automatically generated the closest address to the discharge. The system is storing the coordinates for the location of the pinpoint on the map. If the location of the discharge is not at an easily identifiable street address, then you can clarify the location of the discharge in the “Selected Address of Discharge Description” box, such as next to the little league field or another identifiable landmark. Click on the “Next Step” button.

Pause

On the Wizard Step 2, the selected jurisdiction will be displayed based on the address entered in Step 1. This is the local area that will receive the public alerts based on the choices made by the public when they signed up to receive environmental notifications.

Highlight different options while reading

If you wish to add a larger area to the public notifications, you may do so using the Available Jurisdictions. You can select an entire county or a single village or somewhere in between. When you are done, click on the “Next Step” button.

Pause while changing screens

Step 3 includes all the detailed information about the sewage discharge.

Start typing in the information while this is being read

The “Headline” will be what appears in a text message. We are asking that you use the following pattern that we provide. Enter the County Name, City/Town/or Village, Sewage Discharge, any Public Areas impacted, and any other information that you would like to provide. The Mobile Device Headline and the Short Mobile Headline will automatically be pre-populated based on the headline that you enter. Ensure that all three headlines are the same.

While this is being read, just enter in the data at the appropriate time.

“Start Date and Time of the Discharge” is when the discharge actually started, not the time of discovery. Use your best estimate of the time if it is not directly known. You can

either just type in the date and the time or you can use the calendar icon and the clock icon. The clock icon will give you increments of one hour. You can also use the clock and then modify it in the text box.

If the discharge has ended, choose the Yes radio button. If the discharge has not ended, choose the No radio button. If it is unknown whether the discharge has ended, select the Unknown button.

For the “End/Estimated End Date and Time”, enter the end date and time. If the discharge is ongoing or unknown, enter in your best estimate of when the discharge will end.

Pause

“Does the Discharge Reach Surface Water?” Choose the appropriate answer. If yes is chosen, two more questions will appear.

For “How Does The Discharge Reach Surface Water?”, choose “Man-made Structure”, such as a pipe or drainage ditch, or “Overland Flow” which, for example, may be through a grassy field and into a stream.

In the text box next to “Receiving Waterbody”, enter in the name of the surface water body where the discharge is going.

Next, is the “Potentially Impacted Public Area.” Choose one of the three radio buttons. If Yes is chosen, then a list of choices will pop up and you need to choose at least one public area, but can choose more. Once one is chosen, you may enter in the name of the affected area, if known.

Brief Pause

Check one or more boxes for the “System Components.” A text box will open and you can specify the exact manhole, pump station, or give more details in the Other text box at the bottom of the list.

Brief Pause

In “Reason For Discharge”, choose a check box or boxes and enter in more details.

Pause

Now it is time for the volume section. The quantity is either the number of gallons discharged or the rate at which the discharge is flowing. If you need to estimate this value, choose the “Estimate” radio button. If you know the volume or rate, then choose the “Actual” button. In the drop down box, choose either the volume or rate units.

Brief Pause

Now choose the “Treated State” from the drop down list. Choose “Untreated”, “Partially Treated With Disinfection”, or “Partially Treated Without Disinfection.”

Next, you may enter in text to describe the discharge, such as is there an odor, a visible contrast, visible debris, etc.

In the text box for “Steps Taken to Contain the Discharge”, please enter in the immediate actions such as using a “vacuum truck to clean up the sewage”, “installed a boom in the river”, etc. The long term corrective actions such as “following a plan” or “implementing a plan” are better suited for the 5 day written report that must be submitted to the Department.

“Additional Instructions” includes a Microsoft Word document where you can add any site specific information or instructions. You can embed a link to your facility or community’s website that explains what you are doing about the sewage in your area. You can also add pictures if you choose.

Pause

For the “Greeting Library” and “Audio Recording” options, no changes are needed.

For the “Message Air Time”, you will always choose “Click here for Immediate Activation.” The message expiration time is built in to default to 7 days later. Do not change this time.

If you have a text file or spreadsheet that you would like to add, you can do so using the “Add a File” button.

Click on the “Next Step” button. If you miss entering in a required field, a pop up window will let you know which fields were left blank and are also highlighted in red so you can easily find where you are missing information.

Pause while screen is changing

Step 4 is where the alert is finally sent out to the people who need to know about the sewage discharge. If you want to see the alert as it will appear to the public as an email, click the “Preview this Alert” button.

Pause while preview of alert is displayed

Otherwise, choose the “Publish” button. A pop-up box will appear. Are you sure you want to publish the draft? Click OK.

Do not save as a template. If you want to copy the alert another time and make a few changes, then it is best to either save a draft or copy it from the initial notification screen. This will be explained in part 2 of this video series.

Change to closing slide

This concludes the step by step instructions for entering sewage discharge reports into NY-ALERT.

For more information, please go to the Sewage Pollution Right to Know webpage at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/90315.html>

If you have any questions, you can submit them to DEC via e-mail at overflow@dec.ny.gov or by phone at 518-402-8177.