

Biosolids Management in Oklahoma

What are biosolids?

Biosolids are the nutrient-rich organic material produced by treatment of domestic sewage at a wastewater treatment facility. If they meet EPA criteria found in 40 CFR Part 503 for pathogen control, vector control, and pollutant limits, biosolids may be beneficially reused as fertilizer by land application.

Who regulates the biosolids program in Oklahoma?

DEQ has been given delegation by EPA to administer the biosolids program.

Is a biosolids permit required?

Yes. Any person or entity that intends to land-apply biosolids must obtain a permit and receive approval for a Biosolids Management Plan from the DEQ. The Plan must contain:

1. A copy of the wastewater permit application (available from DEQ).
2. General information.
3. Source description and processes.
4. Biosolids characteristics.
5. Identification of specific sites.
6. Operations.
7. Testing, analysis, and monitoring.
8. Notice, record keeping and reporting.
9. Maps.
10. Any other information required by the Department.

Additional details on the above requirements can be found in OAC 252:606 or 40 CFR Part 503.



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What are the considerations of a biosolids management program?

Suitability of biosolids for fertilizer use is determined by measuring or evaluating the following:

- Nutrient assessment of the biosolids and land application sites to ensure the application as a fertilizer improves and maintains productive soils and stimulates plant growth.
- Compliance with pollutant limits for specific heavy metals.
- Operational standards to control pathogens and reduce attraction of vectors.
- Evaluation of certain characteristics of the land application sites including soil type and analysis, flooding susceptibility, slope, cropping patterns, vegetative cover and organic matter content.

Is the use of biosolids as fertilizer a widespread practice?

Yes, both nationwide and in Oklahoma. EPA estimates that about 60 percent of all sewage sludge are biosolids that are beneficially used as a fertilizer.

Requirements in addition to those listed above may apply. For additional information on this subject please contact your local DEQ representative or DEQ's Water Quality Division at (405) 702-8100.