



**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**

[www.mvp.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil)

**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Regulatory Program

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The mission of the Corps of Engineer's regulatory program is to protect the nation's aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. The Corps evaluates permit applications for essentially all construction activities that occur in the nation's waters and wetlands. Corps' permits are also necessary for any work, including dredging, in the nation's navigable waters. The Corps balances the reasonably foreseeable benefits and detriments of proposed projects and makes permit decisions that recognize the essential values of the nation's aquatic ecosystems, as well as the property rights of citizens who want to use their land. During the permit process, the Corps considers the views of other federal, state and local agencies, interest groups and the general public. The results of this careful public interest review are fair and equitable decisions that allow reasonable use of private property, infrastructure development and growth of the economy, while offsetting the authorized impacts to the waters of the U.S. The adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are offset by mitigation requirements, which may include restoring, creating and preserving aquatic functions and values.

The Regulatory Programs include Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Corps strives to make its permit decisions in a timely manner that minimizes impacts to the regulated public. The St. Paul District's regulatory jurisdiction covers the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. In 2003, the district's regulatory staff made 8,353 jurisdictional determinations and issued 3,956 general permits, 498 nationwide permits and 603 letters of permission.

### **Section 10, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899**

Under Section 10, a Corps' permit is required to do any work in, over or under a navigable water of the U.S. Water bodies have been designated as navigable waters of the U.S. based on their past, present or potential use for transportation for interstate commerce. These waters include many of the nation's larger rivers and lakes. Activities such as dredging and construction of docks, bulkheads and utility lines may require review under this act to ensure they will not cause an obstruction to navigation and are not contrary to the public interest.

### **Section 404, Clean Water Act**

Under Section 404, a Corps' permit is required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Most U.S. water bodies and wetlands in the nation are subject to the Corps' Section 404 regulatory authority. Regulated discharges include filling wetlands for development, grading or pushing material around within a wetland, disturbing wetland soil during land clearing, etc. The general rule is that for an activity to receive a 404 permit, it must comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's Section 404(b)(1) guidelines. The guidelines require the activity be the least environmentally damaging alternative that is feasible and that adverse impacts are avoided, then minimized, and then compensated for (such as creating or restoring wetlands to replace those that would be filled). Activities must not be contrary to the public interest, as determined by the Corps. Early in 2000, the St. Paul District replaced all Corps' Section 404 nationwide permits across Minnesota and Wisconsin with a combination of statewide regional general permits and letter-of-permission evaluation procedures.

### **Obtaining a Corps' Permit**

Contact the Corps' regulatory officer for the county the project is in as early as possible in the project planning process. To find this person's name and phone number, see the regulatory officer listings on the St. Paul District's regulatory web page at: [www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory) or call the Corps' St. Paul office at (651) 290-5375. The Corps' regulatory officer will provide further information and guidance.