

Question: *Can treated effluent or reclaimed water be discharged to Lake Washington?*

The discharge of treated effluent to Lake Washington is no longer prohibited. WAC 372-32 which was originally filed in 1960 to prevent further degradation of water quality in Lake Washington was repealed in 1998. Any discharges of wastewater to Lake Washington would have to comply with other statutory and regulatory requirements, including the statutory requirement in RCW 35.58.200 that all sewage collected by any political subdivision within a metropolitan municipal corporation service area be discharged into the metropolitan system.

There are currently no published state regulations specifically for discharge of reclaimed water to Lake Washington. Reclaimed water use requirements – including direct flow augmentations into rivers, streams and other freshwater bodies – are governed by the standards (part of Codified as Chapter 90.46 RCW) for reclaimed water use and jointly administered by the Washington Department of Health and Ecology. Permits for use are negotiated on a case by case basis with regulatory agencies under the Water Reclamation and Reuse Standards adopted by the state in 1997. The Department of Ecology is developing new rules for reclaimed water, to be completed by December 31, 2010.

Existing King County water reuse policies broadly support the county's ability to place reclaimed water into Lake Washington, while acknowledging that additional analyses and input from affected parties would be needed to determine the feasibility of such freshwater discharges.

Specific concerns regarding the potential placement of reclaimed water into Lake Washington voiced during the RWSP process are summarized below:

- Potential for unacceptable risks to fisheries; impairment of salmon habitat and migration
- Current listing of Lake Washington under section 303(d) would heighten scrutiny of proposed discharges and complicate permitting efforts
- Need for additional studies regarding the potential impacts and benefits of such discharges