

33 CFR PART 330

NATIONWIDE PERMIT PROGRAM

Authority: 33 U.S.C. 401 et seq. ; 33 U.S.C. 1344; 33 U.S.C. 1413.

Source: 56 FR 59134, Nov. 22, 1991, unless otherwise noted.

§ 330.1 Purpose and policy.

§ 330.2 Definitions.

§ 330.3 Activities occurring before certain dates.

§ 330.4 Conditions, limitations, and restrictions.

§ 330.5 Issuing, modifying, suspending, or revoking nationwide permits and authorizations.

§ 330.6 Authorization by nationwide permit.

§ 330.1 Purpose and policy.

(a) **Purpose.** This part describes the policy and procedures used in the Department of the Army's nationwide permit program to issue, modify, suspend, or revoke nationwide permits; to identify conditions, limitations, and restrictions on the nationwide permits; and, to identify any procedures, whether required or optional, for authorization by nationwide permits.

(b) **Nationwide permits.** Nationwide permits (NWP) are a type of general permit issued by the Chief of Engineers and are designed to regulate with little, if any, delay or paperwork certain activities having minimal impacts. The NWP are proposed, issued, modified, reissued (extended), and revoked from time to time after an opportunity for public notice and comment. Proposed NWP or modifications to or reissuance of existing NWP will be adopted only after the Corps gives notice and allows the public an opportunity to comment on and request a public hearing regarding the proposals. The Corps will give full consideration to all comments received prior to reaching a final decision.

(c) **Terms and conditions.** An activity is authorized under an NWP only if that activity and the permittee satisfy all of the NWP's terms and conditions. Activities that do not qualify for authorization under an NWP still may be authorized by an individual or regional general permit. The Corps will consider unauthorized any activity requiring Corps authorization if that activity is under construction or completed and does not comply with all of the terms and conditions of an NWP, regional general permit, or an individual permit. The Corps will evaluate unauthorized

activities for enforcement action under 33 CFR part 326. The district engineer (DE) may elect to suspend enforcement proceedings if the permittee modifies his project to comply with an NWP or a regional general permit. After considering whether a violation was knowing or intentional, and other indications of the need for a penalty, the DE can elect to terminate an enforcement proceeding with an after-the-fact authorization under an NWP, if all terms and conditions of the NWP have been satisfied, either before or after the activity has been accomplished.

(d) ***Discretionary authority.*** District and division engineers have been delegated a discretionary authority to suspend, modify, or revoke authorizations under an NWP. This discretionary authority may be used by district and division engineers only to further condition or restrict the applicability of an NWP for cases where they have concerns for the aquatic environment under the Clean Water Act section 404(b)(1) Guidelines or for any factor of the public interest. Because of the nature of most activities authorized by NWP, district and division engineers will not have to review every such activity to decide whether to exercise discretionary authority. The terms and conditions of certain NWPs require the DE to review the proposed activity before the NWP authorizes its construction. However, the DE has the discretionary authority to review any activity authorized by NWP to determine whether the activity complies with the NWP. If the DE finds that the proposed activity would have more than minimal individual or cumulative net adverse effects on the environment or otherwise may be contrary to the public interest, he shall modify the NWP authorization to reduce or eliminate those adverse effects, or he shall instruct the prospective permittee to apply for a regional general permit or an individual permit. Discretionary authority is also discussed at 33 CFR 330.4(e) and 330.5.

(e) ***Notifications.***

(1) In most cases, permittees may proceed with activities authorized by NWPs without notifying the DE. However, the prospective permittee should carefully review the language of the NWP to ascertain whether he must notify the DE prior to commencing the authorized activity. For NWPs requiring advance notification, such notification must be made in writing as early as possible prior to commencing the proposed activity. The permittee may presume that his project qualifies for the NWP unless he is otherwise notified by the DE within a 30-day period. The 30-day period starts on the date of receipt of the notification in the Corps district office and ends 30 calendar days later regardless of weekends or holidays. If the DE notifies the prospective permittee that the notification is incomplete, a new 30-day period will commence upon receipt of the revised notification. The prospective permittee may not proceed with the proposed activity before expiration of the 30-day period unless otherwise notified by the DE. If the DE fails to act within the 30-day period, he must use the procedures of 33 CFR 330.5 in order to modify, suspend, or revoke the NWP authorization.

(2) The DE will review the notification and may add activity-specific conditions to ensure that the activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP and that the adverse impacts on the aquatic environment and other aspects of the public interest are individually and cumulatively minimal.

(3) For some NWPs involving discharges into wetlands, the notification must include a wetland delineation. The DE will review the notification and determine if the individual and

cumulative adverse environmental effects are more than minimal. If the adverse effects are more than minimal the DE will notify the prospective permittee that an individual permit is required or that the prospective permittee may propose measures to mitigate the loss of special aquatic sites, including wetlands, to reduce the adverse impacts to minimal. The prospective permittee may elect to propose mitigation with the original notification. The DE will consider that proposed mitigation when deciding if the impacts are minimal. The DE shall add activity-specific conditions to ensure that the mitigation will be accomplished. If sufficient mitigation cannot be developed to reduce the adverse environmental effects to the minimal level, the DE will not allow authorization under the NWP and will instruct the prospective permittee on procedures to seek authorization under an individual permit.

(f) **Individual Applications.** DEs should review all incoming applications for individual permits for possible eligibility under regional general permits or NWPs. If the activity complies with the terms and conditions of one or more NWP, he should verify the authorization and so notify the applicant. If the DE determines that the activity could comply after reasonable project modifications and/or activity-specific conditions, he should notify the applicant of such modifications and conditions. If such modifications and conditions are accepted by the applicant, verbally or in writing, the DE will verify the authorization with the modifications and conditions in accordance with 33 CFR 330.6(a). However, the DE will proceed with processing the application as an individual permit and take the appropriate action within 15 calendar days of receipt, in accordance with 33 CFR 325.2(a)(2), unless the applicant indicates that he will accept the modifications or conditions.

(g) **Authority.** NWPs can be issued to satisfy the permit requirements of section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, section 404 of the Clean Water Act, section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, or some combination thereof. The applicable authority will be indicated at the end of each NWP. NWPs and their conditions previously published at 33 CFR 330.5 and 330.6 will remain in effect until they expire or are modified or revoked in accordance with the procedures of this part.

§ 330.2 Definitions.

(a) The definitions found in 33 CFR parts 320–329 are applicable to the terms used in this part.

(b) **Nationwide** permit refers to a type of general permit which authorizes activities on a nationwide basis unless specifically limited. (Another type of general permit is a “regional permit” which is issued by division or district engineers on a regional basis in accordance with 33 CFR part 325). (See 33 CFR 322.2(f) and 323.2(h) for the definition of a general permit.)

(c) **Authorization** means that specific activities that qualify for an NWP may proceed, provided that the terms and conditions of the NWP are met. After determining that the activity complies with all applicable terms and conditions, the prospective permittee may assume an authorization under an NWP. This assumption is subject to the DE's authority to determine if an activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP. If requested by the permittee in writing, the

DE will verify in writing that the permittee's proposed activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP. A written verification may contain activity-specific conditions and regional conditions which a permittee must satisfy for the authorization to be valid.

(d) **Headwaters** means non-tidal rivers, streams, and their lakes and impoundments, including adjacent wetlands, that are part of a surface tributary system to an interstate or navigable water of the United States upstream of the point on the river or stream at which the average annual flow is less than five cubic feet per second. The DE may estimate this point from available data by using the mean annual area precipitation, area drainage basin maps, and the average runoff coefficient, or by similar means. For streams that are dry for long periods of the year, DEs may establish the point where headwaters begin as that point on the stream where a flow of five cubic feet per second is equaled or exceeded 50 percent of the time.

(e) **Isolated waters** means those non-tidal waters of the United States that are:

(1) Not part of a surface tributary system to interstate or navigable waters of the United States; and

(2) Not adjacent to such tributary waterbodies.

(f) **Filled area** means the area within jurisdictional waters which is eliminated or covered as a direct result of the discharge (*i.e.* , the area actually covered by the discharged material). It does not include areas excavated nor areas impacted as an indirect effect of the fill.

(g) **Discretionary authority** means the authority described in §§330.1(d) and 330.4(e) which the Chief of Engineers delegates to division or district engineers to modify an NWP authorization by adding conditions, to suspend an NWP authorization, or to revoke an NWP authorization and thus require individual permit authorization.

(h) **Terms and conditions**. The “terms” of an NWP are the limitations and provisions included in the description of the NWP itself. The “conditions” of NWPs are additional provisions which place restrictions or limitations on all of the NWPs. These are published with the NWPs. Other conditions may be imposed by district or division engineers on a geographic, category-of-activity, or activity-specific basis (See 33 CFR 330.4(e)).

(i) **Single and complete project** means the total project proposed or accomplished by one owner/developer or partnership or other association of owners/developers. For example, if construction of a residential development affects several different areas of a headwater or isolated water, or several different headwaters or isolated waters, the cumulative total of all filled areas should be the basis for deciding whether or not the project will be covered by an NWP. For linear projects, the “single and complete project” (*i.e.* , single and complete crossing) will apply to each crossing of a separate water of the United States (*i.e.* , single waterbody) at that location; except that for linear projects crossing a single waterbody several times at separate and distant locations, each crossing is considered a single and complete project. However, individual channels in a braided stream or river, or individual arms of a large, irregularly-shaped wetland or lake, etc., are not separate waterbodies.

(j) *Special aquatic sites* means wetlands, mudflats, vegetated shallows, coral reefs, riffle and pool complexes, sanctuaries, and refuges as defined at 40 CFR 230.40 through 230.45.

§ 330.3 Activities occurring before certain dates.

The following activities were permitted by NWP's issued on July 19, 1977, and, unless the activities are modified, they do not require further permitting:

(a) Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States outside the limits of navigable waters of the United States that occurred before the phase-in dates which extended Section 404 jurisdiction to all waters of the United States. The phase-in dates were: After July 25, 1975, discharges into navigable waters of the United States and adjacent wetlands; after September 1, 1976, discharges into navigable waters of the United States and their primary tributaries, including adjacent wetlands, and into natural lakes, greater than 5 acres in surface area; and after July 1, 1977, discharges into all waters of the United States, including wetlands. (section 404)

(b) Structures or work completed before December 18, 1968, or in waterbodies over which the DE had not asserted jurisdiction at the time the activity occurred, provided in both instances, there is no interference with navigation. Activities completed shoreward of applicable Federal Harbor lines before May 27, 1970 do not require specific authorization. (section 10)

§ 330.4 Conditions, limitations, and restrictions.

(a) *General.* A prospective permittee must satisfy all terms and conditions of an NWP for a valid authorization to occur. Some conditions identify a "threshold" that, if met, requires additional procedures or provisions contained in other paragraphs in this section. It is important to remember that the NWP's only authorize activities from the perspective of the Corps regulatory authorities and that other Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, or authorizations may also be required.

(b) *Further information.*

(1) DEs have authority to determine if an activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP.

(2) NWP's do not obviate the need to obtain other Federal, state, or local permits, approvals, or authorizations required by law.

(3) NWP's do not grant any property rights or exclusive privileges.

(4) NWP's do not authorize any injury to the property or rights of others.

(5) NWP's do not authorize interference with any existing or proposed Federal project.

(c) *State 401 water quality certification.*

(1) State 401 water quality certification pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act, or waiver thereof, is required prior to the issuance or reissuance of NWP's authorizing activities which may result in a discharge into waters of the United States.

(2) If, prior to the issuance or reissuance of such NWP's, a state issues a 401 water quality certification which includes special conditions, the division engineer will make these special conditions regional conditions of the NWP for activities which may result in a discharge into waters of United States in that state, unless he determines that such conditions do not comply with the provisions of 33 CFR 325.4. In the latter case, the conditioned 401 water quality certification will be considered a denial of the certification (see paragraph (c)(3) of this section).

(3) If a state denies a required 401 water quality certification for an activity otherwise meeting the terms and conditions of a particular NWP, that NWP's authorization for all such activities within that state is denied without prejudice until the state issues an individual 401 water quality certification or waives its right to do so. State denial of 401 water quality certification for any specific NWP affects only those activities which may result in a discharge. That NWP continues to authorize activities which could not reasonably be expected to result in discharges into waters of the United States.¹

(4) DEs will take appropriate measures to inform the public of which activities, waterbodies, or regions require an individual 401 water quality certification before authorization by NWP.

(5) The DE will not require or process an individual permit application for an activity which may result in a discharge and otherwise qualifies for an NWP solely on the basis that the 401 water quality certification has been denied for that NWP. However, the district or division engineer may consider water quality, among other appropriate factors, in determining whether to exercise his discretionary authority and require a regional general permit or an individual permit.

(6) In instances where a state has denied the 401 water quality certification for discharges under a particular NWP, permittees must furnish the DE with an individual 401 water quality certification or a copy of the application to the state for such certification. For NWP's for which a state has denied the 401 water quality certification, the DE will determine a reasonable period of time after receipt of the request for an activity-specific 401 water quality certification (generally 60 days), upon the expiration of which the DE will presume state waiver of the certification for

¹ NWP's numbered 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19, 24, 28, and 35, do not require 401 water quality certification since they would authorize activities which, in the opinion of the Corps, could not reasonably be expected to result in a discharge and in the case of NWP 8 is seaward of the territorial seas. NWP's numbered 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 32, 36, 37, and 38, involve various activities, some of which may result in a discharge and require 401 water quality certification, and others of which do not. State denial of 401 water quality certification for any specific NWP in this category affects only those activities which may result in a discharge. For those activities not involving discharges, the NWP remains in effect. NWP's numbered 12, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26, and 40 involve activities which would result in discharges and therefore 401 water quality certification is required.

the individual activity covered by the NWP's. However, the DE and the state may negotiate for additional time for the 401 water quality certification, but in no event shall the period exceed one (1) year (see 33 CFR 325.2(b)(1)(ii)). Upon receipt of an individual 401 water quality certification, or if the prospective permittee demonstrates to the DE state waiver of such certification, the proposed work can be authorized under the NWP. For NWPs requiring a 30-day predischage notification the district engineer will immediately begin, and complete, his review prior to the state action on the individual section 401 water quality certification. If a state issues a conditioned individual 401 water quality certification for an individual activity, the DE will include those conditions as activity-specific conditions of the NWP.

(7) Where a state, after issuing a 401 water quality certification for an NWP, subsequently attempts to withdraw it for substantive reasons after the effective date of the NWP, the division engineer will review those reasons and consider whether there is substantial basis for suspension, modification, or revocation of the NWP authorization as outlined in §330.5. Otherwise, such attempted state withdrawal is not effective and the Corps will consider the state certification to be valid for the NWP authorizations until such time as the NWP is modified or reissued.

(d) *Coastal zone management consistency determination.*

(1) Section 307(c)(1) of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) requires the Corps to provide a consistency determination and receive state agreement prior to the issuance, reissuance, or expansion of activities authorized by an NWP that authorizes activities within a state with a Federally-approved Coastal Management Program when activities that would occur within, or outside, that state's coastal zone will affect land or water uses or natural resources of the state's coastal zone.

(2) If, prior to the issuance, reissuance, or expansion of activities authorized by an NWP, a state indicates that additional conditions are necessary for the state to agree with the Corps consistency determination, the division engineer will make such conditions regional conditions for the NWP in that state, unless he determines that the conditions do not comply with the provisions of 33 CFR 325.4 or believes for some other specific reason it would be inappropriate to include the conditions. In this case, the state's failure to agree with the Corps consistency determination without the conditions will be considered to be a disagreement with the Corps consistency determination.

(3) When a state has disagreed with the Corps consistency determination, authorization for all such activities occurring within or outside the state's coastal zone that affect land or water uses or natural resources of the state's coastal zone is denied without prejudice until the prospective permittee furnishes the DE an individual consistency certification pursuant to section 307(c)(3) of the CZMA and demonstrates that the state has concurred in it (either on an individual or generic basis), or that concurrence should be presumed (see paragraph (d)(6) of this section).

(4) DEs will take appropriate measures, such as public notices, to inform the public of which activities, waterbodies, or regions require prospective permittees to make an individual consistency determination and seek concurrence from the state.

(5) DEs will not require or process an individual permit application for an activity otherwise qualifying for an NWP solely on the basis that the activity has not received CZMA consistency agreement from the state. However, the district or division engineer may consider that factor, among other appropriate factors, in determining whether to exercise his discretionary authority and require a regional general permit or an individual permit application.

(6) In instances where a state has disagreed with the Corps consistency determination for activities under a particular NWP, permittees must furnish the DE with an individual consistency concurrence or a copy of the consistency certification provided to the state for concurrence. If a state fails to act on a permittee's consistency certification within six months after receipt by the state, concurrence will be presumed. Upon receipt of an individual consistency concurrence or upon presumed consistency, the proposed work is authorized if it complies with all terms and conditions of the NWP. For NWPs requiring a 30-day pre-discharge notification the DE will immediately begin, and may complete, his review prior to the state action on the individual consistency certification. If a state indicates that individual conditions are necessary for consistency with the state's Federally-approved coastal management program for that individual activity, the DE will include those conditions as activity-specific conditions of the NWP unless he determines that such conditions do not comply with the provisions of 33 CFR 325.4. In the latter case the DE will consider the conditioned concurrence as a nonconcurrence unless the permittee chooses to comply voluntarily with all the conditions in the conditioned concurrence.

(7) Where a state, after agreeing with the Corps consistency determination, subsequently attempts to reverse its agreement for substantive reasons after the effective date of the NWP, the division engineer will review those reasons and consider whether there is substantial basis for suspension, modification, or revocation as outlined in 33 CFR 330.5. Otherwise, such attempted reversal is not effective and the Corps will consider the state CZMA consistency agreement to be valid for the NWP authorization until such time as the NWP is modified or reissued.

(8) Federal activities must be consistent with a state's Federally-approved coastal management program to the maximum extent practicable. Federal agencies should follow their own procedures and the Department of Commerce regulations appearing at 15 CFR part 930 to meet the requirements of the CZMA. Therefore, the provisions of 33 CFR 330.4(d)(1)–(7) do not apply to Federal activities. Indian tribes doing work on Indian Reservation lands shall be treated in the same manner as Federal applicants.

(e) **Discretionary authority.** The Corps reserves the right (*i.e.*, discretion) to modify, suspend, or revoke NWP authorizations. Modification means the imposition of additional or revised terms or conditions on the authorization. Suspension means the temporary cancellation of the authorization while a decision is made to either modify, revoke, or reinstate the authorization. Revocation means the cancellation of the authorization. The procedures for modifying, suspending, or revoking NWP authorizations are detailed in §330.5.

(1) A division engineer may assert discretionary authority by modifying, suspending, or revoking NWP authorizations for a specific geographic area, class of activity, or class of waters within his division, including on a statewide basis, whenever he determines sufficient concerns for the environment under the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines or any other factor of the public interest so requires, or if he otherwise determines that the NWP would result in more than minimal adverse environmental effects either individually or cumulatively.

(2) A DE may assert discretionary authority by modifying, suspending, or revoking NWP authorization for a specific activity whenever he determines sufficient concerns for the environment or any other factor of the public interest so requires. Whenever the DE determines that a proposed specific activity covered by an NWP would have more than minimal individual or cumulative adverse effects on the environment or otherwise may be contrary to the public interest, he must either modify the NWP authorization to reduce or eliminate the adverse impacts, or notify the prospective permittee that the proposed activity is not authorized by NWP and provide instructions on how to seek authorization under a regional general or individual permit.

(3) The division or district engineer will restore authorization under the NWPs at any time he determines that his reason for asserting discretionary authority has been satisfied by a condition, project modification, or new information.

(4) When the Chief of Engineers modifies or reissues an NWP, division engineers must use the procedures of §330.5 to reassert discretionary authority to reinstate regional conditions or revocation of NWP authorizations for specific geographic areas, class of activities, or class of waters. Division engineers will update existing documentation for each NWP. Upon modification or reissuance of NWPs, previous activity-specific conditions or revocations of NWP authorization will remain in effect unless the DE specifically removes the activity-specific conditions or revocations.

(f) ***Endangered species.*** No activity is authorized by any NWP if that activity is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species as listed or proposed for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), or to destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of such species.

(1) Federal agencies should follow their own procedures for complying with the requirements of the ESA.

(2) Non-federal permittees shall notify the DE if any Federally listed (or proposed for listing) endangered or threatened species or critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project. In such cases, the prospective permittee will not begin work under authority of the NWP until notified by the district engineer that the requirements of the Endangered Species Act have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. If the DE determines that the activity may affect any Federally listed species or critical habitat, the DE must initiate section 7 consultation in accordance with the ESA. In such cases, the DE may:

(i) Initiate section 7 consultation and then, upon completion, authorize the activity under the NWP by adding, if appropriate, activity-specific conditions; or

(ii) Prior to or concurrent with section 7 consultation, assert discretionary authority (see 33 CFR 330.4(e)) and require an individual permit (see 33 CFR 330.5(d)).

(3) Prospective permittees are encouraged to obtain information on the location of threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Office, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

(g) ***Historic properties.*** No activity which may affect properties listed or properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, is authorized until the DE has complied with the provisions of 33 CFR part 325, appendix C.

(1) Federal permittees should follow their own procedures for compliance with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and other Federal historic preservation laws.

(2) Non-federal permittees will notify the DE if the activity may affect historic properties which the National Park Service has listed, determined eligible for listing, or which the prospective permittee has reason to believe may be eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. In such cases, the prospective permittee will not begin the proposed activity until notified by the DE that the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. If a property in the permit area of the activity is determined to be an historic property in accordance with 33 CFR part 325, appendix C, the DE will take into account the effects on such properties in accordance with 33 CFR part 325, appendix C. In such cases, the district engineer may:

(i) After complying with the requirements of 33 CFR part 325, appendix C, authorize the activity under the NWP by adding, if appropriate, activity-specific conditions; or

(ii) Prior to or concurrent with complying with the requirements of 33 CFR part 325, appendix C, he may assert discretionary authority (see 33 CFR 330.4(e)) and instruct the prospective permittee of procedures to seek authorization under a regional general permit or an individual permit. (See 33 CFR 330.5(d).)

(3) The permittee shall immediately notify the DE if, before or during prosecution of the work authorized, he encounters an historic property that has not been listed or determined eligible for listing on the National Register, but which the prospective permittee has reason to believe may be eligible for listing on the National Register.

(4) Prospective permittees are encouraged to obtain information on the location of historic properties from the State Historic Preservation Officer and the National Register of Historic Places.

§ 330.5 Issuing, modifying, suspending, or revoking nationwide permits and authorizations.

(a) **General.** This section sets forth the procedures for issuing and reissuing NWP's and for modifying, suspending, or revoking NWP's and authorizations under NWP's.

(b) **Chief of Engineers.**

(1) Anyone may, at any time, suggest to the Chief of Engineers, (ATTN: CECW-OR), any new NWP's or conditions for issuance, or changes to existing NWP's, which he believes to be appropriate for consideration. From time-to-time new NWP's and revocations of or modifications to existing NWP's will be evaluated by the Chief of Engineers following the procedures specified in this section. Within five years of issuance of the NWP's, the Chief of Engineers will review the NWP's and propose modification, revocation, or reissuance.

(2) **Public notice.**

(i) Upon proposed issuance of new NWP's or modification, suspension, revocation, or reissuance of existing NWP's, the Chief of Engineers will publish a document seeking public comments, including the opportunity to request a public hearing. This document will also state that the information supporting the Corps' provisional determination that proposed activities comply with the requirements for issuance under general permit authority is available at the Office of the Chief of Engineers and at all district offices. The Chief of Engineers will prepare this information which will be supplemented, if appropriate, by division engineers.

(ii) Concurrent with the Chief of Engineers' notification of proposed, modified, reissued, or revoked NWP's, DEs will notify the known interested public by a notice issued at the district level. The notice will include proposed regional conditions or proposed revocations of NWP authorizations for specific geographic areas, classes of activities, or classes of waters, if any, developed by the division engineer.

(3) **Documentation.** The Chief of Engineers will prepare appropriate NEPA documents and, if applicable, section 404(b)(1) Guidelines compliance analyses for proposed NWP's. Documentation for existing NWP's will be modified to reflect any changes in these permits and to reflect the Chief of Engineers' evaluation of the use of the permit since the last issuance. Copies of all comments received on the document will be included in the administrative record. The Chief of Engineers will consider these comments in making his decision on the NWP's, and will prepare a statement of findings outlining his views regarding each NWP and discussing how substantive comments were considered. The Chief of Engineers will also determine the need to hold a public hearing for the proposed NWP's.

(4) **Effective dates.** The Chief of Engineers will advise the public of the effective date of any issuance, modification, or revocation of an NWP.

(c) ***Division Engineer.***

(1) A division engineer may use his discretionary authority to modify, suspend, or revoke NWP authorizations for any specific geographic area, class of activities, or class of waters within his division, including on a statewide basis, by issuing a public notice or notifying the individuals involved. The notice will state his concerns regarding the environment or the other relevant factors of the public interest. Before using his discretionary authority to modify or revoke such NWP authorizations, division engineers will:

(i) Give an opportunity for interested parties to express their views on the proposed action (the DE will publish and circulate a notice to the known interested public to solicit comments and provide the opportunity to request a public hearing);

(ii) Consider fully the views of affected parties;

(iii) Prepare supplemental documentation for any modifications or revocations that may result through assertion of discretionary authority. Such documentation will include comments received on the district public notices and a statement of findings showing how substantive comments were considered;

(iv) Provide, if appropriate, a grandfathering period as specified in §330.6(b) for those who have commenced work or are under contract to commence in reliance on the NWP authorization; and

(v) Notify affected parties of the modification, suspension, or revocation, including the effective date (the DE will publish and circulate a notice to the known interested public and to anyone who commented on the proposed action).

(2) The modification, suspension, or revocation of authorizations under an NWP by the division engineer will become effective by issuance of public notice or a notification to the individuals involved.

(3) A copy of all regional conditions imposed by division engineers on activities authorized by NWPs will be forwarded to the Office of the Chief of Engineers, ATTN: CECW-OR.

(d) ***District Engineer.***

(1) When deciding whether to exercise his discretionary authority to modify, suspend, or revoke a case specific activity's authorization under an NWP, the DE should consider to the extent relevant and appropriate: Changes in circumstances relating to the authorized activity since the NWP itself was issued or since the DE confirmed authorization under the NWP by written verification; the continuing need for, or adequacy of, the specific conditions of the authorization; any significant objections to the authorization not previously considered; progress inspections of individual activities occurring under an NWP; cumulative adverse environmental effects resulting from activities occurring under the NWP; the extent of the permittee's

compliance with the terms and conditions of the NWP; revisions to applicable statutory or regulatory authorities; and, the extent to which asserting discretionary authority would adversely affect plans, investments, and actions the permittee has made or taken in reliance on the permit; and, other concerns for the environment, including the aquatic environment under the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, and other relevant factors of the public interest.

(2) *Procedures.*

(i) When considering whether to modify or revoke a specific authorization under an NWP, whenever practicable, the DE will initially hold informal consultations with the permittee to determine whether special conditions to modify the authorization would be mutually agreeable or to allow the permittee to furnish information which satisfies the DE's concerns. If a mutual agreement is reached, the DE will give the permittee written verification of the authorization, including the special conditions. If the permittee furnishes information which satisfies the DE's concerns, the permittee may proceed. If appropriate, the DE may suspend the NWP authorization while holding informal consultations with the permittee.

(ii) If the DE's concerns remain after the informal consultation, the DE may suspend a specific authorization under an NWP by notifying the permittee in writing by the most expeditious means available that the authorization has been suspended, stating the reasons for the suspension, and ordering the permittee to stop any activities being done in reliance upon the authorization under the NWP. The permittee will be advised that a decision will be made either to reinstate or revoke the authorization under the NWP; or, if appropriate, that the authorization under the NWP may be modified by mutual agreement. The permittee will also be advised that within 10 days of receipt of the notice of suspension, he may request a meeting with the DE, or his designated representative, to present information in this matter. After completion of the meeting (or within a reasonable period of time after suspending the authorization if no meeting is requested), the DE will take action to reinstate, modify, or revoke the authorization.

(iii) Following completion of the suspension procedures, if the DE determines that sufficient concerns for the environment, including the aquatic environment under the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, or other relevant factors of the public interest so require, he will revoke authorization under the NWP. The DE will provide the permittee a written final decision and instruct him on the procedures to seek authorization under a regional general permit or an individual permit.

(3) The DE need not issue a public notice when asserting discretionary authority over a specific activity. The modification, suspension, or revocation will become effective by notification to the prospective permittee.

§ 330.6 Authorization by nationwide permit.

(a) *Nationwide permit verification.*

(1) Nationwide permittees may, and in some cases must, request from a DE confirmation that an activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP. DEs should respond as promptly as practicable to such requests.

(2) If the DE decides that an activity does not comply with the terms or conditions of an NWP, he will notify the person desiring to do the work and instruct him on the procedures to seek authorization under a regional general permit or individual permit.

(3) If the DE decides that an activity does comply with the terms and conditions of an NWP, he will notify the nationwide permittee.

(i) The DE may add conditions on a case-by-case basis to clarify compliance with the terms and conditions of an NWP or to ensure that the activity will have only minimal individual and cumulative adverse effects on the environment, and will not be contrary to the public interest.

(ii) The DE's response will state that the verification is valid for a specific period of time (generally but no more than two years) unless the NWP authorization is modified, suspended, or revoked. The response should also include a statement that the verification will remain valid for the specified period of time, if during that time period, the NWP authorization is reissued without modification or the activity complies with any subsequent modification of the NWP authorization. Furthermore, the response should include a statement that the provisions of §330.6(b) will apply, if during that period of time, the NWP authorization expires, or is suspended or revoked, or is modified, such that the activity would no longer comply with the terms and conditions of an NWP. Finally, the response should include any known expiration date that would occur during the specified period of time. A period of time less than two years may be used if deemed appropriate.

(iii) For activities where a state has denied 401 water quality certification and/or did not agree with the Corps consistency determination for an NWP the DE's response will state that the proposed activity meets the terms and conditions for authorization under the NWP with the exception of a state 401 water quality certification and/or CZM consistency concurrence. The response will also indicate the activity is denied without prejudice and cannot be authorized until the requirements of §§330.4(c)(3), 330.4(c)(6), 330.4(d)(3), and 330.4(d)(6) are satisfied. The response will also indicate that work may only proceed subject to the terms and conditions of the state 401 water quality certification and/or CZM concurrence.

(iv) Once the DE has provided such verification, he must use the procedures of 33 CFR 330.5 in order to modify, suspend, or revoke the authorization.

(b) ***Expiration of nationwide permits.*** The Chief of Engineers will periodically review NWP's and their conditions and will decide to either modify, reissue, or revoke the permits. If an NWP is not modified or reissued within five years of its effective date, it automatically expires and becomes null and void. Activities which have commenced (i.e., are under construction) or are under contract to commence in reliance upon an NWP will remain authorized provided the activity is completed within twelve months of the date of an NWP's expiration, modification, or revocation, unless discretionary authority has been exercised on a case-by-case basis to modify, suspend, or revoke the authorization in accordance with 33 CFR 330.4(e) and 33 CFR 330.5 (c) or (d). Activities completed under the authorization of an NWP which was in effect at the time the activity was completed continue to be authorized by that NWP.

(c) ***Multiple use of nationwide permits.*** Two or more different NWP's can be combined to authorize a "single and complete project" as defined at 33 CFR 330.2(i). However, the same NWP cannot be used more than once for a single and complete project.

(d) ***Combining nationwide permits with individual permits.*** Subject to the following qualifications, portions of a larger project may proceed under the authority of the NWP's while the DE evaluates an individual permit application for other portions of the same project, but only if the portions of the project qualifying for NWP authorization would have independent utility and are able to function or meet their purpose independent of the total project. When the functioning or usefulness of a portion of the total project qualifying for an NWP is dependent on the remainder of the project, such that its construction and use would not be fully justified even if the Corps were to deny the individual permit, the NWP does not apply and all portions of the project must be evaluated as part of the individual permit process.

(1) When a portion of a larger project is authorized to proceed under an NWP, it is with the understanding that its construction will in no way prejudice the decision on the individual permit for the rest of the project. Furthermore, the individual permit documentation must include an analysis of the impacts of the entire project, including related activities authorized by NWP.

(2) NWP's do not apply, even if a portion of the project is not dependent on the rest of the project, when any portion of the project is subject to an enforcement action by the Corps or EPA.

(e) ***After-the-fact authorizations.*** These authorizations often play an important part in the resolution of violations. In appropriate cases where the activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP, the DE can elect to use the NWP for resolution of an after-the-fact permit situation following a consideration of whether the violation being resolved was knowing or intentional and other indications of the need for a penalty. For example, where an unauthorized fill meets the terms and conditions of NWP 13, the DE can consider the appropriateness of allowing the residual fill to remain, in situations where said fill would normally have been permitted under NWP 13. A knowing, intentional, willful violation should be the subject of an enforcement action leading to a penalty, rather than an after-the-fact authorization. Use of after-the-fact NWP authorization must be consistent with the terms of the Army/EPA Memorandum of Agreement on Enforcement. Copies are available from each district engineer.