

1.2.3 PRETREATMENT STANDARDS

The pretreatment standards have been proclaimed under the Clean Water Act -- 40 CFR 403 [Code of Federal Regulations]. They apply to industrial wastewater being discharged into municipal sewer systems served by publicly owned treatment works (POTWs). According to the EPA, 35% of toxics discharged into surface waters in the United States come from companies connected to POTWs.

The standards include:

At the federal level

Both general and special prohibitions applicable to all discharges:

- pollutants which are not removed at treatment stations or interfere with their operation;
- corrosive pollutants;
- pollutants which may cause fires or explosions;
- solid or viscous pollutants which may obstruct stations;
- effluent whose temperature exceeds 104°F (40°C).

Category-based standards for each segment of industry:

- restrictions on 126 pollutants deemed by the EPA to be hazardous to health and to the environment;
- restrictions on non-conventional pollutants in each sector (heavy metals, cyanides, PCBs, dioxins etc).

These category-based standards are established along with, and are part of, the guidelines for effluent discharged directly into surface waters.