

Regulations Governing the Collection of Water Pollution Control Fees Amended

The collection of water pollution control fees started on 1 May 2015, but a number of problems in administering online reporting, evaluations and auditing have arisen. Thus on 23 June 2016, the EPA announced amendments to the *Water Pollution Control Fee Collection Regulations* which should result in a clearer, more comprehensive system of water pollution control fee collection.

In order to solve the problems in online reporting, evaluations and auditing that have arisen when collecting water pollution control fees, the EPA reviewed and revised the regulations. The regulations covering coal-fired power stations that use the seawater flue gas desulfurization process in their air pollution control facilities have also been amended to improve the fee calculation methodology.

The amendments to water pollution control fees for coal-fired power stations that use the seawater flue gas desulfurization process for air pollution control took effect on 1 July 2016. The special water pollution fee rate for enterprises operating effluent pipes discharging into the ocean will take effect on 1 January 2017. All of the other amendments took effect on the date of announcement. All affected enterprises should use the revised water pollution fee rates when submitting their fees for the first half of 2016.

The main points of the amendments are as follows:

- 1) For coal-fired power stations that use the seawater flue gas desulfurization process in their air pollution control facilities, the sulfur oxides in the effluent discharged into the ocean will be subject to water pollution control fee collection. The fee rate calculation method for desulfurized effluent, fee reductions, volume calculation methods, fee rates, and information/documents to be submitted to the central competent authority have been added.
- 2) Enterprises that have water pollution control permits only for trivalent chromium or hexavalent chromium should submit their fees according to the total chromium.
- 3) Enterprises that use ocean outfall to discharge effluent directly into the ocean will be granted preferential fee rates.
- 4) Any enterprise that intentionally misreports or under-reports their water pollution control fees will not be eligible for discounted fee rates.
- 5) If during the fee payment period the competent authority has two or more sets of inspection/test numerical values, an average value must be calculated for comparisons and calculating fees. Also, for substances harmful to health, the percentage difference between submitted test values and the competent authority's inspection values allowed have been adjusted to reduce the chances of disputes.
- 6) Enterprises that do not have water pollution control permits must submit sufficient accompanying evidence when submitting data on discharged effluent volumes. Enterprises that calculate fees according to the daily permitted volume on their water pollution control permits may calculate and submit effluent volumes according to the exact number of days that wastewater was discharged during the period for which payment is due.
- 7) The reporting and payment procedures have been simplified by removing the requirement that reports and payment invoices must be submitted online.
- 8) The water pollution fee calculation methods for enterprises that operate both land and marine wastewater discharge systems have been clarified.
- 9) Enterprises and operators of sewer systems that are unable to submit the required information within the stated deadline will be allowed to apply for extensions.
- 10) The central competent authority is authorized to determine the fees due for enterprises that did not pay the water pollution control fees as the regulations stipulate.
- 11) Water pollution control fees will be waived for waste bathing water from hotels, etc. where the wastewater has been kept separate from other effluent and filtered. The fees will also be waived for wastewater from new enterprises during their initial trial operation approved by the competent authority.
- 12) For enterprises that use unscrupulous means to avoid paying their water pollution control fees, the central competent authority will be entitled to recalculate the fees and collect the previously unpaid amount.

Information on regulations governing the collection of water pollution control fees – including collection methods and the latest updates – can be found on the online reporting and queries system on the EPA's Water Pollution Control Fees Website: <http://wpcf.epa.gov.tw/>.

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