



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

BUREAU OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

DIVISION OF MUNICIPAL and RESIDUAL WASTE

GENERAL PERMIT WMGM026

**BENEFICIAL USE OF SEWAGE SLUDGE INCINERATOR ASH AS AN
INGREDIENT OR A COMPONENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF A HIGH-
QUALITY TOPSOIL OR COMPOST MATERIAL**

Issued: July 15, 2025

Expires: July 15, 2035

BENEFICIAL USE OF SEWAGE SLUDGE INCINERATOR ASH AS AN INGREDIENT OR A COMPONENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF A HIGH-QUALITY TOPSOIL OR COMPOST MATERIAL

A. Description:

This general permit authorizes the beneficial use only of sewage sludge incinerator ash, hereinafter referred to as “incinerator ash”, for wholesale purposes for use as an ingredient or a component in the production of a high quality topsoil or compost material.

B. Determination of Applicability Requirements:

A person or municipality that proposes to operate under the terms and conditions of this general permit after the date of permit issuance must obtain a “Determination of Applicability” (“DOA”) from the appropriate Department Regional Office (see attached list) prior to commencing authorized activities under this general permit. A completed application on forms provided by the Department must be submitted electronically to the appropriate Department Regional Office. Additionally, the application fee should be submitted to the appropriate Department Regional Office. Checks shall be made payable to the “Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”. No activities shall commence unless approved, in writing, by the Department.

C. Operating Conditions:

1. The approval herein granted is limited to the beneficial use only of sewage sludge incinerator ash, hereinafter referred as “incinerator ash”, for wholesale purposes for use as an ingredient or a component in the production of a high quality topsoil or compost material.
2. The incinerator ash may be beneficially used if the chemical analysis of the incinerator ash does not exceed the concentration limits for any parameter specified in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1

Parameters	Total (mg/kg) ⁽¹⁾	Leachable⁽²⁾ (mg/l)
pH	5.5 – 12.0 Std Unit	-
Aluminum	-	5.0
Antimony	30	0.15
Arsenic	20	1.25
Barium	5,000	50.0
Boron	7,000	3.15
Cadmium	20	0.125
Total Chromium	500	2.5
Copper	1,500	32.5
Lead	300	1.25

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Mercury	17	0.05
Molybdenum	75	-
Nickel	200	17.5
Nitrate Nitrogen	Monitor and Report	10.0
PCBs	4.0	-
Selenium	60	1.0
Silver	84	2.5
Zinc	2,800	125
Total Solids %	Monitor and Report	-
Phosphorous %	Monitor and Report	-
Potassium %	Monitor and Report	-
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen	Monitor and Report	-
Copper-Molybdenum Ratio	Monitor and Report	-

(1) = Dry Weight Basis

(2) = Leachability evaluations shall be conducted using the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (EPA method 1311) or the Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure (EPA method 1312).

The determination of compliance with Table 1 may be based on the 90 percent upper confidence level for each metal or the 80 percent confidence interval for pH using the Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste (EPA SW-846) as guidance for the statistical treatment of data.

3. The incinerator ash that does not meet the requirements as specified in Condition 2, or that is not beneficially used in accordance with the Conditions in this general permit, or as described in the approved application shall be managed properly at a permitted disposal facility unless authorized by the Department, in writing, to do otherwise.
4. The incinerator ash shall not be staged or stored as follows:
 - a. Within 100 feet or less of a perennial stream.
 - b. Within 33 feet of an intermittent stream.
 - c. Within 300 feet of a water supply source.
 - d. Within 300 feet of an exceptional value wetland.
 - e. Within 100 feet of a wetland other than an exceptional value wetland.
 - f. In a 100-year flood plain or below the 100-year flood plain.

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- g. Within 3.3 feet of a regional groundwater table.
 - h. Within 100 feet of the edge of a sinkhole or area drainage into a sinkhole.
 - i. Within 50 feet of a property line.
 - j. Within 300 feet of an occupied dwelling.
 - k. Within 300 feet of a school, park or playground.
5. The beneficial use of finished topsoil material and/or finished compost using incinerator ash as a component or ingredient is contingent upon compliance with conditions of this general permit and, if sold, the applicable provisions of the Pennsylvania Fertilizer, Soil Conditioner and Plant Growth Substance Law of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Information related to this law may be obtained from the Department of Agriculture by writing the Bureau of Plant Industry, Division of Agronomic Services, 230 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.
6. Upon cessation of operations or by the expiration date of this general permit or unless extended by the Department in writing, the permittee shall remove any remaining stored incinerator ash and any other residual wastes or other materials which contain or have been mixed with the incinerator ash and shall provide for the processing and disposal of the waste or material in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Act, the environmental protection acts and the regulations promulgated thereunder.
7. Except for the authorized activities as specified in Condition 1 of this general permit, the incinerator ash shall not be mixed with other types of solid wastes, including hazardous waste, municipal waste, special handling waste, or other residual waste, as the terms are defined in 25 Pa. Code § 287.1.
8. The processing (i.e., blending, mixing) of incinerator ash with other waste, as defined in §§271 and 287 of the municipal and residual management regulations, shall be conducted at a processing facility permitted by the Department under the procedures and requirements of the Solid Waste Management Act, 35 P.S. §6018.101 et seq. and regulations promulgated thereunder.
9. The activities authorized by this permit shall not cause or allow conditions that are harmful to the environment, public health or safety, including but not limited to, odors, noise, or other public nuisances. The permittee shall not cause or allow the attraction, harborage, or breeding of vectors. Storage of the produced compost shall be covered to prevent dispersal by wind or water erosion and in a manner that prevents fire or explosion. The

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produced compost may not be stored in a manner that causes ground or surface water contamination.

10. The incinerator ash shall be managed in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Act, the act July 7, 1980, as amended, P.L. 380, 35 P.S. §§ 6018.101 et seq. and the regulations promulgated therein.
11. The local police, fire department, or other appropriate state or local emergency response agencies shall be contacted immediately in the event of a fire, spill, or other hazard arising from the storage and curing of produced compost that threatens public health, safety, and welfare, or the environment, and whenever necessary in the event of personal injury related to such storage.
12. The permittee shall develop and implement a Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency Plan (PPC) that is consistent with the Department's most recent guidelines.
13. The incinerator ash shall not be used as a valley fill material, to fill open pits from coal or non-coal mining or other fills or to level an area or bring an area to grade.
14. Incinerator ash under the authorization granted in this general permit shall be managed in accordance with the permittee's application. Except to the extent the permit states otherwise, the permittee shall utilize the incinerator ash for beneficial use purposes as described in the permit application.
15. The permittee shall comply with the fugitive emissions regulations under 25 Pa. Code, Chapter 123 (relating to standards for contaminants) issued under the Air Pollution Control Act, the Act of January 8, 1960, P.L. 2119, 35 P.S. §4005, and shall comply with all the applicable provisions of 25 Pa. Code §§123.1 and 123.2 (relating to prohibition of certain fugitive emissions and fugitive particulate matter).
16. Nothing in this permit shall be construed to supersede, amend, or authorize a violation of any of the provisions of any valid and applicable local law, ordinance, or regulation, providing that said local law, ordinance, or regulation is not preempted by the Solid Waste Management Act (SWMA), 35 P.S. §§ 6018.101—6018.1001; and the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988, 53 P.S. §§4000.101, et seq.
17. As a condition of this general permit and of the permittee's authority to conduct the activities authorized by this general permit, the permittee hereby authorizes and consents to allow authorized employees or agents of the Department, without advance notice or search warrant, upon presentation of appropriate credentials and without delay, to have access to and inspect all areas on which solid waste management activities are being, will be, or have been conducted. This authorization and consent shall include consent to collect samples of waste, soils, water, or gases; take photographs; perform measurements, surveys, and other tests; inspect any monitoring equipment; inspect the methods of operation and inspect and/or copy documents, books, and papers required by

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the Department to be maintained. This permit condition is referenced in accordance with Sections 6018.608 and 6018.610(7) of the SWMA, 35 P.S. §§ 6018.608 and 6018.610(7). This condition in no way limits any other powers granted under the SWMA.

18. Any independent contractors or agents retained by the permittee in the completion of activities authorized under this general permit shall be subject to compliance history review by the Department prior to performance of any activities, as specified by the SWMA.
19. Failure of measures herein approved to perform as intended, or as designed, or in compliance with the applicable laws, rules, and regulations and terms and conditions of this permit, for any reason, shall be grounds for the revocation or suspension of the permittee's approval to operate under this permit.
20. The activities authorized by this general permit shall not harm or present a threat of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the people or environment of this Commonwealth. The Department may modify, suspend, revoke, and reissue the authorization granted in this general permit if it deems necessary to prevent harm or the threat of harm to the public health, and the environment or if they cannot be adequately regulated under the conditions of this general permit.
21. The permittee shall comply with the terms and conditions of this general permit and with the environmental protection acts to the same extent as if the activities were covered by an individual permit. The Department may require an individual permit be obtained if the permittee cannot comply with the conditions of this general permit or is conducting an activity that harms or presents a threat of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the public or the environment of this Commonwealth.
22. This permit does not authorize and shall not be construed as an approval to discharge any waste, wastewater, leachate, or runoff from the site of processing to the land or waters of the Commonwealth.
23. Best Management Practices shall be implemented to divert storm water run-on from the storage area. Storm water runoff shall be managed in accordance with The Clean Streams Law and regulations promulgated thereunder. Prior to beginning operations at the facility, the operator must obtain all necessary storm water management permits.
24.
 - a. Storm water run-on at the facility should be diverted away from the staging and storage areas of the incinerator ash material. Surface water controls shall be based on a 24-hour precipitation event to be expected once every 25 years. Proper drainage (i.e., dikes, diversions, drains, etc.) must be constructed and maintained to prevent ponding and excessive wetting.
 - b. Storm water runoff from the incinerator ash storage areas and leachate, if generated, shall be directed to:

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1. A properly sized vegetated filter area for treatment,
 2. A properly sized holding pond for later reuse, or
 3. A holding tank for later disposal.
25. The permittee shall not cause or allow a point or non-point source discharge of the storm water runoff or leachate or both in this Condition from the facility to the surface water of this Commonwealth. An NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit may be required if a point or non-point source discharge of the storm water runoff or leachate or both to the surface waters of the Commonwealth exists.
26. The permittee shall maintain in force and affect a general liability insurance policy in accordance with 25 Pa. Code, Chapter 287, Subchapter E (relating to bonding and insurance requirements) to provide continuous coverage during operation of the facility and until the Department issues a final closure certification.
27. Equipment used for the collection, storage and transportation of the incinerator ash shall be maintained in good operating condition. Weekly inspections of collection and storage areas and their surrounding environs are to be conducted to determine compliance of the terms and conditions of this general permit, and for evidence of failure.
28. The storage of incinerator ash material shall be in a manner which prevents harborage or breeding of vectors (including mosquitoes) or creation of odor, dust, litter, noise and other nuisances which may be harmful to the public health, safety, welfare, and the environment. Storage shall be in a manner that prevents dispersal of incinerator ash material by wind or water erosion and shall comply with the requirements of Title 25 Pa Code, Chapter 285 (relating to Storage, Collection and Transportation of Municipal Waste)
29. Unless otherwise authorized by the Department in writing, the storage of incinerator ash shall comply with the following requirements:
- a. During the calendar year (commencing on January 1), incinerator ash shall not be stored for more than one (1) year, and at any one time the maximum amount stored may not exceed the total amount of 5,000 tons per year as described in the approved application.
30. Unauthorized wastes shall be properly disposed of at a permitted municipal waste disposal facility. Any on-site storage shall comply with the requirements as specified in Pa. Code, Chapter 285.

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31. Analytical testing required by this general permit shall be performed by a laboratory accredited under the Pennsylvania Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Act, Act of 2002, 27 Pa. C.S.A. §§ 4101-4113.

D. Recordkeeping:

1. The permittee shall maintain records of all analytical evaluations conducted in accordance with this permit, and records shall be made available to the Department upon request. Required records shall be retained for a minimum of 5 years. Records of analytical evaluations must include, at a minimum, the following for each sample: the dates of sampling and testing, sampling procedures utilized, name of the individual who collected the sample, the volume or weight of the sample, each parameter tested, the analytical results, the name of the analytical laboratory used, and the analytical methodologies employed.
2. The permittee shall maintain records of all waste accepted by the facility, and records shall be made available to the Department upon request. Required records shall be retained for a minimum of 5 years. Records of each source of incoming waste must include, at a minimum, the following: the name, address, and phone number of each source of incoming waste; the date of receipt; the quantity of waste received; the results of visual observations; and the name, address, and phone number of the destination of each outgoing shipment of waste. The permittee shall also maintain records of spills or releases that include, at a minimum, the following: the location, date, time, identification, and quantity of spilled or released material, and a description of how the material was cleaned up. The permittee shall also maintain records of all reports submitted to the Department or to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
3. a. In compliance with the requirements specified in Condition 2 of this general permit, representative samples of the incinerator ash must be collected and analyzed. To obtain a representative sample of the incinerator ash, the sample must be taken from the correct locations and represent the entire amount of incinerator ash produced for beneficial use authorized in this general permit. More than one sample is usually necessary to accurately represent the incinerator ash produced and stored. Core samples at different locations and at various depths shall be collected and then composited to obtain a representative sample of the incinerator ash produced or stored. The key is to obtain a representative sample. In general, the more samples taken, the greater the chance that the sampling results will be representative of the quality of incinerator ash that is produced.

Should knowledge of the production of incinerator ash, visual observations, or analytical results indicate variability in the quality of the incinerator ash material, more frequent testing shall be conducted.

- b. At a minimum, the frequency of monitoring for the constituents required in Condition 2 shall be as follows:

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TABLE 2

Amount of Incinerator Ash Produced For Beneficial Use (Tons per 365 Day Period)	Frequency of Monitoring
Greater than 0 but less than 290	Once per year
Equal to or greater than 290 but less than 1,500	Once every 6 months
Equal to or greater than 1,500 but less than 15,000	Once per 90 days
Equal to or greater than 15,000	Once per month

4. a. The permittee shall collect representative samples of the incinerator ash, and analyze for the total (mg/kg) and leachable (mg/L) levels for each parameter specified in Table 1 of Condition 2 of this general permit.
- b. Upon request by the Department, the permittee shall also collect and analyze representative samples of the incinerator ash material, as required in Condition 2 of this general permit, within 48 hours of the request.
5. a. The permittee shall maintain records of unacceptable incinerator ash that is disposed by the permittee. The records shall include the name and address of the disposal location, date of disposal, volume or weight of the incinerator ash that is disposed.
- b. The permittee shall maintain records of volume or weight of the incinerator ash that is generated for beneficial use annually.
- c. The permittee shall maintain records of volume or weight and location of the incinerator ash for beneficial use that is stored.
- d. The permittee shall maintain records of chemical analyses for the incinerator ash for beneficial use as required in Condition 2 of this general permit.

The records required in this Condition shall be retained by the permittee for a minimum of 5 years and made available to the Department upon request.

E. Reporting Requirements:

1. Any person that operates under the provisions of this permit shall immediately notify the Department via certified mail of any changes in: the company name, address, owners,

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operators, and/or responsible officials of the company; the facility location, land ownership or the right to operate on the land occupied; the physical or chemical characteristics of the incinerator ash material; the process which generates the incinerator ash; in compliance status, and the status of any permit issued by the Department or federal government under the environmental protection acts.

2. Persons operating under the provisions of this general permit shall submit, within 30 days after the anniversary date of this permit, to the Department (See address in attached list) and the appropriate Department Regional Office, an annual report which contains the information outlined in Condition 3, and Paragraphs D.4. and D.5., and summarizes the following information:
 - a. Name and address of the generator of incinerator ash.
 - b. Weight or volume of the incinerator ash generated for beneficial use authorized under this general permit.
 - c. Weight or volume of the incinerator ash produced, stored, sold, traded or given away during the last 12 months ending on the anniversary date of the permit.
 - d. Laboratory reports for the parameters specified in Condition 2 of this general permit. The analysis data submitted in compliance with this requirement must be from samples of the incinerator ash material collected within the past 12 months.
3. Any person operating under the provisions of this general permit must notify the Department, in writing, if the incinerator facility is relocated or if new location(s) are to be included under this general permit. At least thirty (30) days prior to a permittee operating at a new location, two (2) copies of the information as required in: 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23 of Paragraph F of this general permit must be provided to the Department (see address in attached list), for review and approval.
4. The permittee and subsequent sellers of the incinerator ash material shall inform all persons or municipalities and other entities who purchase incinerator ash from the permittee, which propose to beneficially use the incinerator ash material covered under this general permit of the conditions and limitations imposed on the beneficial use of incinerator ash by the Department of Environmental Protection (Department). This notification shall be by providing a copy of Appendix A (Use Restrictions) of this general permit to all persons or municipalities which propose to beneficially used the incinerator ash. The conditions in Appendix A also apply to: (1) the permittee, (2) any municipality or person who obtains a determination of applicability to conduct activities authorized by this general permit, and (3) all subsequent end-users of the incinerator ash.

The permittee shall record the name and address of each person who is given or purchases the incinerator ash and shall record its intended use(s).

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5. The permittee shall immediately notify the Department's Emergency Hotline by telephone at 800-541-2050 and the waste management program in the appropriate DEP regional office (see attached list) of any accidental spills and shall take appropriate immediate action to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment.

F. Renewal:

A permittee that plans to continue the operations authorized under this general permit, after the expiration date indicated on the approval for coverage page, shall file a complete application for permit renewal at least 180 days before the expiration date of this general permit unless permission has been granted by the Department for submission at a later date. The renewal applications shall be submitted to the appropriate DEP Regional Office (see attached list) and include, at a minimum, the following:

1. General Information Form (Authorization Application for a Residual or Municipal Waste General Permit Application),
2. Form B (Professional Certification),
3. Form 20 (Application for a Municipal or Residual Waste General Permit),
4. Form 27M (Acceptance of General Permit Conditions),
5. Updated bonding worksheets, if applicable.

Additionally, a renewal application fee in the amount required under §271.842 (b) of the Municipal Waste Regulations, and identified in Section A (General Information) of the Form 20, must be sent to the appropriate DEP Regional Office. A check shall be made payable to the "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

In the event that a timely and complete application for renewal has been submitted and the Department is unable, through no fault of the permittee, to reissue the general permit or approval for coverage before its current coverage expiration date, the terms and conditions of the approved coverage will automatically continue and will remain fully effective and enforceable pending the issuance or denial of the renewal for permit coverage, provided the permittee is, and has been, operating in compliance with the terms and conditions of the general permit.

APPENDIX A

USE RESTRICTIONS GENERAL PERMIT WMGM026

The following "Use Restrictions" apply to the beneficial use of sewage sludge incinerator ash, hereinafter referred as "incinerator ash", for use as an ingredient or a component in the production of a high quality topsoil or compost material. Persons or municipalities receiving, storing and/or using the incinerator ash as an ingredient or a component in the production of a high quality topsoil or compost material must be made aware of the following requirements:

USE RESTRICTIONS:

1. The beneficial use of incinerator ash as an ingredient or a component, in the production of a high quality topsoil or compost material, shall be equal to or less than 5% or 100 pounds (lb) of the incinerator ash per ton of topsoil or compost material in the production of high quality soil or compost material.
2. The incinerator ash shall not be placed in direct contact with surface water or ground water.
3. Hazardous waste, municipal waste, municipal special handling waste, and other residual waste may not be mixed, stored and/or beneficially used with the incinerator ash.
5. The incinerator ash shall be stored in a manner that prevents harborage or breeding of vectors or creation of odor, dust, litter, noise and other nuisances which may be harmful to the public health, safety, welfare, and the environment. Storage shall be in a manner that prevents dispersal of incinerator ash by wind or water erosion.
6. Storm water runoff from the incinerator ash storage areas shall not cause surface water pollution or groundwater degradation and shall be managed in accordance with The Clean Streams Law and regulations promulgated thereunder.
7. Unless otherwise authorized by the Department in writing, during the calendar year (commencing on January 1), incinerator ash shall not be stored for more than one (1) year, and at any one time the maximum amount stored may not exceed the total amount of materials as described in the approved application.

**Department of Environmental Protection
Regional Offices
(and Counties Served)**

- I. Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia.

Southeast Regional Office
2 East Main Street
Norristown, PA 19401
Phone: (484) 250 - 5960

- II. Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming.

Northeast Regional Office
2 Public Square
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711-0790
Phone: (570) 826 – 2516

- III. Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, York.

Southcentral Regional Office
909 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-8200
Phone: (717) 705 – 4706

- IV. Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, Union.

Northcentral Regional Office
208 West 3rd Street - Suite 101
Williamsport, PA 17701
Phone: (570) 327 – 3653

- V. Allegheny, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland.

Southwest Regional Office
400 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745
Phone: (412) 442 – 4000

- VI. Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, Warren.

Northwest Regional Office
230 Chestnut Street
Meadville, PA 16335-3481
Phone: 814-332-6848