


COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Water Programs Coordination
Ellen Gilinsky, Ph.D., Director

Subject: Guidance Memo No. 06-2016 - Amendment # 1, Significant Figures for Discharge Monitoring Reports

To: Regional Directors

From: Ellen Gilinsky, Ph.D., Director 

Date: November 16, 2006

Copies: Regional Water Permit Managers, Regional Water Compliance Managers, Amy Owens, OWPP Staff

Exceptions to Use of Two Significant Figures for discharge Monitoring Reports:

The purpose of this amendment is to correct a misstatement in Guidance Memorandum No. 06-2016, Significant Figures for Discharge Monitoring Reports. Limits for: (a) bacteriological parameters, (b) acute and chronic Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) endpoints, and (c) Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) limits that are less than 10 are exceptions to the use of two significant figures in writing permit limits. The bacteriological and WET data are based on “counts” and therefore not subject to significant figure rules. For BOD, the method is not accurate enough to provide data beyond a whole number.

Guidance Memorandum No. 06-2016 indicated that one significant figure would be acceptable for bacteriological limits and WET endpoints. This is incorrect for the reason stated above. The other exception given in the memo [*More than two significant figures may be necessary for water quality based limits (to be consistent with the underlying standard) or for limits expressed as large numbers that do not contain decimal points.*] is correct and is unchanged by this amendment.

Electronic Copy:

An electronic copy of this guidance in PDF format is available for staff internally on DEQNET, and for the general public on DEQ's website at: <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/water/>.

Contact information:

Questions or comments regarding this topic can be directed to Betsy Ziomek at (804) 698-4181, e-mail address esziomek@deq.virginia.gov.

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