

WAC 173-180-650 Plan review and approval. (1) Ecology must endeavor to review each plan in sixty-five calendar days. If the plan is submitted in conjunction with a contingency plan required under chapter 173-182 WAC, ecology may extend the prevention plan review period an additional sixty-five calendar days. Upon receipt of a plan, ecology must evaluate promptly whether the plan is incomplete. If ecology determines that a plan is incomplete, the submitter must be notified of deficiencies. The review period will not begin until ecology receives a complete plan.

All prevention plans will be valid for no more than five years from the date on the approval letter. Ecology will review prevention plans to ensure compliance with this chapter.

(2) Ecology must regularly notify interested parties of any prevention plans, which are under review by ecology, and make plans available for review by all ecology programs, other state, local, tribal, and federal agencies, and the public. Ecology must accept comments on the plan from any interested party during the first thirty calendar days of review by ecology.

(3) A plan must be approved if, in addition to meeting criteria in WAC 173-180-530, it demonstrates that when implemented, it can:

(a) Provide best achievable protection from damages caused by the discharge of oil into the waters of the state;

(b) Minimize the likelihood that facility oil spills will occur;

(c) Minimize the size and impacts of those facility oil spills which do occur; and

(d) After the adoption of facility operation standards by rule by ecology pursuant to RCW 90.56.220:

(i) Provide for compliance with prevention standards and deadlines established by facility operations standards adopted by rule by ecology pursuant to RCW 90.56.220; and

(ii) Provide, to the maximum extent practicable, protection from oil spill risk factors identified in the risk analysis required by WAC 173-180-630, for those risk factors not addressed by facility operations standards adopted by rule by ecology pursuant to RCW 90.56.220.

(4) When reviewing plans, ecology must, in addition to the above criteria, consider the following at a minimum:

(a) The volume and type of oil(s) addressed by the plan;

(b) The history and circumstances of prior spills by similar types of facilities, including spill reports by ecology on-scene coordinators;

(c) Inspection reports;

(d) The presence of hazards unique to the facility, such as seismic activity or production processes;

(e) The sensitivity and value of natural resources within the geographic area covered by the plan; and

(f) Any pertinent local, state, tribal, federal agency, or public comments received on the plan.

(5) Ecology may approve a plan based upon an expedited review pursuant to criteria set out in this chapter, if that plan has been approved by a federal agency or other state which ecology has deemed to apply approval criteria which equal or exceed those of ecology.

(6) Ecology must endeavor to notify the facility owner or operator within five working days after the review is completed whether the plan has been approved.

(a) If the plan receives approval, the facility owner or operator must receive a certificate of approval describing the terms of approval, including an expiration date.

(b) Ecology may conditionally approve a plan by requiring a facility owner or operator to operate with specific precautionary measures until unacceptable components of the plan are resubmitted and approved.

(i) Precautionary measures may include, but are not limited to, reducing oil transfer rates, increasing personnel levels, or restricting operations to daylight hours or favorable weather conditions. Precautionary measures may also include additional requirements to ensure availability of response equipment.

(ii) A plan holder must have thirty calendar days after ecology gives notification of conditional status to submit to ecology and implement required changes, with the option for an extension at ecology's discretion. Plan holders who fail to meet conditional requirements or provide required changes in the time allowed must lose conditional approval status.

(c) If plan approval is denied or revoked, the facility owner or operator must receive an explanation of the factors for disapproval and a list of deficiencies. The facility must not continue oil storage, transfer, production, or other operations until a plan for that facility has been approved.

(d) Ecology's decisions under this chapter are reviewable in superior court.

(e) If a plan holder demonstrates an inability to comply with an approved prevention plan or otherwise fails to comply with requirements of this chapter, ecology may, at its discretion:

(i) Place conditions on approval pursuant to (b) of this subsection; or

(ii) Revoke its approval pursuant to (c) of this subsection.

(f) Approval of a plan by ecology does not constitute an express assurance regarding the adequacy of the plan nor constitute a defense to liability imposed under state law.

(7) Ecology must prepare a manual to aid ecology staff responsible for plan review. This manual must be made available to plan preparers. While the manual will be used as a tool to conduct review of a plan, ecology will not be bound by the contents of the manual.

(8) Ecology must work with the office of marine safety to ensure that no duplication of regulatory responsibilities occurs in the review of prevention plans from marine facilities.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 88.46.160, 88.46.165, and chapter 90.56 RCW. WSR 06-20-034 (Order 06-02), § 173-180-650, filed 9/25/06, effective 10/26/06.]