

Regional Spill Hotline Feasibility Study FAQ

1. What is a regional spill hotline?

A regional spill hotline is one way for citizens to report spills and other environmental concerns, without worrying about where the incident was witnessed. It is intended to remove barriers that the public might have around reporting spills by providing easy-to-use tools to report a spill regardless of the location.

2. What are the potential benefits of a regional spill hotline?

A regional spill hotline presumably will make it easier for the public to report any incidents without having to determine which number to call. A regional spill hotline will also help to improve response times, reduce calls that were intended for other jurisdictions, promote mutual aid assistance on large cross-jurisdictional spills, and direct reports to the correct agency while recording regional spills in a searchable database to track trends.

3. Who is the intended audience of the regional spill hotline?

Feasibility of a statewide hotline is under evaluation. Pending results of this feasibility study, the intended audience is anyone living or travelling in Washington State.

4. What is the goal of this feasibility study?

The goal of this feasibility study is to gather information and conduct an assessment on the feasibility and value of a regional or statewide common “hotline” for citizens and municipal staff in Washington State to report spills and environmental incidents.

5. How will the feasibility study work?

The feasibility study will explore options and evaluate several different alternatives for implementation of a regional spill hotline. Your feedback and participation will help to shape the end product and ensure the results are accurate and relevant. This initial survey is the first step in the process, but there will be several other opportunities to provide input during the course of the study.

6. How much will this feasibility study cost?

The grant funding for the feasibility study is from Stormwater Action Monitoring (SAM). SAM receives funds from Municipal Stormwater Permittees as identified in the Phase I and Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

Regional Spill Hotline Feasibility Study FAQ

7. Who will pay for ongoing operations and maintenance of a regional spill hotline?

The feasibility study will research and recommend potential funding sources for covering the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance of the regional spill hotline.

8. Doesn't Ecology's Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS) already do this?

ERTS has previously been used for this function but was not designed to act as a regional spill hotline. The study will research whether ERTS is the appropriate vehicle for continuing to receive reports from the public in the future.

9. Is this hotline intended to take the place of existing local illicit discharge hotline numbers?

No. It is intended to supplement the illicit discharge hotline number that you currently have.

10. What about my marketing material that advertises my local illicit discharge hotline number?

A regional hotline would supplement illicit discharge hotline numbers that are already in place. The outcome of this feasibility study will not affect local illicit discharge hotline numbers and all the marketing and outreach materials will still be valuable.

11. Will this study change how municipal employees report spills?

This study is not intended to change how municipal employees report spills. This study will look at the benefits of having a regional spill hotline that could forward calls to the appropriate local responders.

12. Will this study change how my jurisdiction responds to spills?

No. This study is focused on developing recommendations that look at improving the ease of reporting spills by the public. Your jurisdiction's spill response procedures will not be changed.

13. Will this study change my reporting requirements or data collected?

No. If you are a permitted jurisdiction under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) municipal stormwater permit, you will still have the same tracking and reporting requirements as described in the NPDES municipal stormwater permit.