

Biosolids Best Management

Recognizing and Supporting the Best Biosolids Management Programs!



The National Biosolids Partnership (NBP) provides biosolids management training and support that helps biosolids management organizations improve their programs. In response to feedback from biosolids managers, the management program has been streamlined and made more customizable to better fit the needs of participants. So far, over 100 organizations have participated in NBP management training and 33 have had their programs verified by independent third-party auditors, certified by the NBP and have received national recognition for their achievement. The program is available to public agencies and private company preparers.

Look inside to learn the answers to the most frequently asked questions about our new program!



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frequently asked questions

What is an NBP biosolids management program?

The NBP Biosolids Management Program is a comprehensive management tool based on the principles of an Environmental Management System (similar to ISO 14001) requiring continuous improvement to develop, implement, and monitor environmentally sustainable practices. An NBP Biosolids Management Program helps wastewater organizations ensure that they are efficient, responsive, and protective of human health and the environment.

What is new about the program?

The NBP management training program has been streamlined and made more flexible to maximize the benefits to participants. The program will now take 12 rather than 24 months to complete. Participants in the program are anticipated to have an audit-ready program within 12 months. We are defining “audit-ready” as successfully completing all the NBP requirements for an NBP Biosolids Management Program that has been reviewed and found acceptable by the NBP.

The NBP has created a tiered program of recognition for organizations that choose to participate in the Biosolids Management Program. The tiers reflect an organization's efforts to commit to the BMP, develop and implement the BMP, and have the BMP audited by internal and external audit teams. Audits of the BMP help ensure that it meets the requirements of the BMP, produces desired outcomes, and is continually improved and maintained over time.

The requirements for each tier of NBP recognition are as follows.

1 Tier 1: Bronze-Level Recognition

Organization has made a commitment to the NBP Code of Good Practice, with the acknowledged goal of implementing the 17 NBP Biosolids Management Program Elements and obtaining independent verification of the organization's BMP.

2 Tier 2: Silver-Level Recognition

Organization has implemented the 17 BMP Elements and has completed an NBP approved audit, recognizing the BMP as ready for a third party verification audit. To maintain silver-level recognition, organizations must annually conduct internal audits and submit the internal audit reports to NBP.

3 Tier 3: Gold-Level Recognition

Organization has completed an independent, third party BMP verification audit and has committed to conducting annual internal audits. To maintain gold-level recognition, the organization must submit annual internal audit reports to NBP and complete another third party BMP verification audit after five years. Organizations that have obtained gold-level recognition have the option of committing to regular, third party interim audits and achieving platinum-level certification.

4 Tier 4: Platinum-Level Certification

Organization has completed third party BMP verification audit and at least one third-party interim audit with a commitment to a regular schedule of third party interim audits and internal audits. To maintain platinum-level certification, the organization must complete interim audits (at least two third party interim audits between verification audits), must submit interim or internal audit reports to NBP annually, and complete another third party verification audit (or re-verification) after five years.

Organizations may choose to participate in the NBP program at any of these tiers. All biosolids organizations are encouraged to start with a commitment to the NBP Code of Good Practice, learn about a BMP, and implement and seek audits as fits their organization.

While organizations may ultimately choose to not pursue NBP Gold-level Recognition or Platinum-level Certification, both of which require at least 1 independent third-party audit, the NBP program materials are designed to prepare an organization's BMP for audit-readiness. Those organizations can also proceed at their own pace to upgrade through the tiers through the Platinum level.

What does the management training program include?

The training program provides each agency with the knowledge and tools to create an audit-ready program by enhancing the organization's existing biosolids management program. This support includes virtual training and mentoring, guidance documents, and ongoing on-call technical assistance. The resources and support to develop a biosolids management program, however, is available at all times from the NBP staff. In addition, biosolids managers have access to mentoring assistance from currently certified are listed on the NBP web site at www.wef.org/biosolids.

What are the benefits of an independent third-party audit?

Independent third-party verification of a biosolids management program can help improve interactions with stakeholders, such as regulatory bodies, and build or maintain the confidence of local communities. In addition, a successful audit results in certification by the National Biosolids Partnership. Third-party audits have been highly valuable to organizations in improving internal operations (e.g., communications, documentation) and identifying cost-saving measures. Subsequent audits serve to verify the "continuous improvement" aspect of the program.

Who can participate in the NBP program?

Any wastewater agency or organization or commercial biosolids preparer (domestic or international), which prepares biosolids for beneficial use or disposal can participate in the NBP training program.

What if my organization does not produce biosolids for land application?

The NBP program is applicable for all end use and or disposal options and not just for land application. The training program and support can help any organization improve their environmental performance and maintain credibility with their communities and stakeholders. Odors, noise, transportation, and aesthetics are concerns that need to be addressed at all levels of treatment. The NBP program provides a management tool to achieve environmental stewardship goals and the potential for reduced costs and improved internal efficiencies.

Why should my organization participate in the NBP program?

The NBP program provides an organization with the tools to implement a biosolids program that meets NBP requirements, which has many, far-reaching benefits both for the organization and in the community. An NBP biosolids management program will help an organization improve their overall environmental performance and stewardship, which is important to their communities and regulators. Once implemented, management practices result in internal efficiencies and can help managers identify money-saving opportunities. The program provides operators, managers, and administrators with tools to track and monitor critical data to achieve optimized management performance and ensure regulatory compliance. Improved communications protocols will help organizations maintain credibility with communities and stakeholders and enhance relationships with interested parties. Other benefits include capture of institutional knowledge to address aging workforce issues and improved employee morale through clarity of utility mission, goals, and objectives





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getting your organization involved

The full training program is offered through the NBP and can be found at <http://www.biosolids.org>. Other support to improve an existing biosolids management program, however, is always available from the NBP. The NBP can provide the guidance tools, resources, and technical knowledge to assist agencies in improving their existing biosolids management programs or in pursuing certification at any time in accordance with their needs and our resources.

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The National Biosolids Partnership

Formed in 1992, as an alliance of the Water Environment Federation, National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the NBP's mission is to advance environmentally sound biosolids management practices in local communities. To achieve this mission, NBP offers:

- Education and training;
- Technical assistance;
- An information clearinghouse; and
- An EMS-based third-party certification and recognition program for biosolids management systems.

For more information, visit: www.biosolids.org