

Biosolids and Industrial Waste

What are biosolids?

Biosolids, also known as treated sewage sludge, are a primarily organic product produced by wastewater treatment processes. Biosolids are nutrient rich organic material which can be recycled and land applied as a fertilizer or soil amendment. In Nova Scotia, biosolids must meet provincial guidelines and regulations for their storage and land application

What is the difference between biosolids and industrial waste?

Industrial waste produced as the result of agricultural processes. It is produced by a wastewater treatment process that captures the steam and condensation generated by the meat rendering process.

What does it mean to stabilize biosolids?

Biosolids must be processed before being land applied. This process is referred to as stabilization. There are several methods of stabilization including alkaline, composting, heat drying, and digestion. Stabilizing biosolids helps to minimize odours and kill harmful bacteria.

Is land application of biosolids safe?

Yes, when proper guidelines and regulations are followed, biosolids will not pose a health risk to individuals, crop production, or the environment.

Biosolids must be tested for, and must meet strict standards for, nutrients, metals, pH, stabilization, and pathogens. Soil from fields where biosolids will be spread must also be tested for nutrients, pH, and metals before and after biosolids are applied.

How will I know if biosolids have been spread in any areas around my home?

As part of the approval process, a proponent must inform the general public of their intention to land apply biosolids. This may be in the form of an advertisement in a local newspaper or through open house presentations. Signs will also be posted on any sites where biosolids have been applied.

Can groundwater and surface water be affected?

Terms and Conditions of an approval are designed to ensure water supplies are protected from becoming contaminated by biosolids. There are restrictions on location, type, and timing of application of biosolids that limit the risk to water supplies. Regular groundwater and surface water monitoring are also part of the approval process.

What other rules must someone follow if they want to store or land apply biosolids?

They must first obtain an approval from the Department of Environment and Labour.

An approval for the land application of biosolids would include:

- identifying the source of the material
- identifying the specific parcels of land where material would be applied
- specific separation distances from water courses, other building, etc.
- testing requirements for nutrients, metals, pH, stabilization, and pathogens

For more information on the guidelines and regulations on biosolids, please contact:

Department of Environment and Labour

902-424-5300

1-877-9ENVIRO

www.gov.ns.ca/enla