

BIOSOLIDS EMS — ELEMENT 6.0

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING



REVISION	EFFECTIVE DATE	APPROVAL SIGNATURE
15	October 06, 2021	

PURPOSE

To achieve improved relations with interested parties, the City of Fort Worth must proactively seek and create meaningful opportunities for public participation in the planning, implementation, and auditing of the Biosolids Management Program. Establishing quality, two-way flows of information with interested parties is critical for achieving public acceptance of biosolids management practices. Views and perspectives from interested parties provides additional insight that may be utilized to develop and update program goals and objectives, identify concerns about environmental impacts, and evaluate potential areas for improvement. Element 6.0 outlines the specific mechanisms used by the City to create avenues for public participation and to identify the needs, concerns and perspectives of interested parties before problems arise or incidents occur.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all public outreach and participation programs for the Biosolids beneficial reuse/recycling program at the Village Creek Water Reclamation Facility (VCWRF).

KEY WORDS

- Biosolids Public Acceptance Requirements
- Biosolids Value Chain
- Interested Parties
- Public Education
- Public Participation
- Business Plan

RESPONSIBILITY

The Biosolids EMS Manager, the Biosolids Contractor, the EMS Management Team and VCWRF staff are responsible for promoting the beneficial reuse/recycling of biosolids produced by the Fort Worth Biosolids Program through various public outreach and participation efforts.

PROCEDURE

The City of Fort Worth, the Water Department, VCWRF, the Biosolids Contractor, and other City Contractors and Vendors will support public involvement in the planning, implementation and auditing of the biosolids program.

The procedures and educational programs described in this element target the following identified interested parties:

- VCWRF customers
- Stakeholders and interested parties – farmers, ranchers, adjacent residents, County officials, etc.
- Regulators – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- Future customers

Before any new plan for public participation is established within the biosolids program, the EMS Management Team will evaluate historical experience(s) and the effectiveness of similar proposals, to determine if the approach is consistent with City of Fort Worth policies and management goals.

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Information Requests and Complaint Response

The City and the Biosolids Contractor respond daily to comments, complaints, and inquiries about biosolids. These communications are received as telephone calls, letters, emails and comments/posts on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and may provide new perspectives to consider during biosolids management and planning activities, as described below.

When the EMS Management Team is notified of a biosolids complaint or concern, appropriate action is taken. Issues are promptly investigated, typically within the same day, and appropriate corrective action or proactive measures are implemented. Ongoing issues may require a change in operation methods and procedures, or a modification of the Biosolids Policy. If a concern or resulting action affects a contractor's activities, the City and Contractor will discuss the action needed to resolve the issue. For example, odor complaints resulting from biosolids application may be addressed by incorporating material into the soil, moving to a different application site or delaying application until weather conditions are favorable. If the concern or complaint cannot be addressed using standard operating procedures, the Biosolids EMS Manager and Biosolids Contractor discuss the issue and determine the best solution.

City staff and the Biosolids Contractor maintain written communication logs that document public complaints, concerns, feedback, responses and actions taken. Appendix 9.A in Element 9.0, outlines procedures used to respond to complaints and requests for information. SOPs BSLD 07.001 and BSLD 07.002 provide additional detail on how to respond to complaints.

Information requests, complaints and corrective actions are also discussed in regular O&M meetings between the City and the Biosolids Contractor. Similarly, the EMS Management Team reviews information and correspondence they receive to evaluate the effectiveness of the biosolids program, identify opportunities for improvement and recommend program modifications. Goals and objectives may be generated from interested party feedback, as discussed in Element 5.0.

Public Participation Opportunities

Every public participation activity is an opportunity for the EMS Management Team to gather ideas, listen to suggestions and answer questions from interested parties. Feedback from public events is considered when revising the Goals and Objectives Table (Element 5.A) and other elements of the biosolids program. Public participation events and outreach tools currently provided by the City of Fort Worth are summarized below:

Biosolids Educational Events

- **Public Meetings/Presentations**

Educational events are conducted by City or Contractor staff on an as-needed or requested basis. Presentations are provided to Rancher and Farmer Associations, civic groups, gardening groups and other interested parties. Each meeting or presentation is recorded in the Biosolids Public Outreach Event Log (see attached sheet) and filed in the binder for Public Outreach Activities, located in the office of the Biosolids Public Outreach Coordinator.

- **Facility Tours**

VCWRF and Biosolids Contractor staff offer facility tours with an included Biosolids Presentation to the public, upon request. A monthly summary of tours conducted by VCWRF staff and an annual summary of all public participation activities is filed in the Public Outreach Activities binder located in the office of the Biosolids Public Outreach Coordinator. Biosolids feedback and comments are recorded and utilized during biosolids program reviews.

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Brochures/Pamphlets/Handouts

The City, Water Department, VCWRF and Biosolids Contractor have developed several informational brochures and pamphlets that contain contact information for interested party feedback. The City of Fort Worth currently uses a tri-fold brochure with full color graphics to educate the public about proper waste disposal and the benefits of recycling, reuse and biosolids land application. In addition, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handout is distributed at various outreach events and at land application sites via infotubes attached to posted signs. Anyone may provide feedback or request additional information about the City's biosolids program via phone, email or a QR code survey.

Additional Educational and Public Participation Opportunities

The Annual Pretreatment Awards luncheon (Refer to Element 9.0), VCWRF safety meetings and the Biosolids newsletter are additional forums for biosolids education and feedback, as indicated in the table below:

Table 6.1 Public Participation Activities

Activity	Audience	Frequency of Biosolids Information
Pretreatment Industry Awards	Public	Annually
VC Safety Meetings	City of Fort Worth employees	Monthly or Semi-annually
Biosolids Newsletter	City of Fort Worth employees	Quarterly or Semi-annually

Audit Notification

Interested parties are invited to participate in the annual interim and verification audits of the EMS, as outlined in Element 16.0. The City and/or Biosolids Contractor provide notification of the event as follows:

- **City Website**
The location, date and time of each upcoming audit is posted on the Water Department web pages of the City of Fort Worth website (<https://www.fortworthtexas.gov>)
- **Notification To Landowners, Local Officials, and Regulatory Agencies**
The Biosolids Contractor will provide written notification to landowners and local officials of upcoming interim and verification audits by email or letter. In addition, state and federal regulatory agencies are notified via email, phone or letter. All notifications will include the date, time and location of the event.

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REFERENCES

- BMP Guidance Manual, (NBP, June 2011)
- Code of Good Practice, (NBP, June 2011)
- Manual of Good Practice for Biosolids, (NBP, June 2011)
- City of Fort Worth Water Department Business Plan Latest Edition, City of Fort Worth Water Department
- City of Fort Worth Water Department Mission Statement
- Public Outreach Feedback Evaluation Form
- Biosolids Policy

EMS Cross References:

- Element 2.0 Biosolids Management Policy
- Element 3.0 Critical Control Points
- Element 4.0 Legal and Other Requirements
- Element 5.0 Goals And Objectives
- Element 7.0 Roles and Responsibilities
- Element 8.0 Training
- Element 9.0 Communication & Public Outreach
- Element 13.0 Monitoring and Measurement
- Element 15.0 Biosolids Performance And EMS Performance Report
- Element 16.0 Internal EMS Audit
- Element 17.0 Periodic Management Review Of Performance

ATTACHMENTS

- Biosolids FAQ
- Tour Survey
- Biosolids Tri-Fold Brochure
- VCWRF Tour Handout
- Biosolids Public Outreach Event Log
- Public Outreach Feedback Evaluation Form

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REVISION HISTORY

Revision #	Date	Revision Description
15	10-06-2021	Update to all sections including attachments, updated and moved Notification of Land Application Activities section to Element 13.0, removed Notification of Land Application to Local Officials Form
14	10-14-2020	Update to Audit Notification and Attachments sections
13	05-06-2020	Correction of typographical errors
12	03/31/2020	Update to reflect current program status & change in biosolids contractors
11	09/26/2018	Update to Procedure and References sections
10	08/01/2016	Merged element to new format
09	10/06/2014	Updated links, referenced BSLD 02.001 SOP, updated attachments
08	01/06/2014	Include criteria for input from regulators.
07	08/05/2013	Updated public participation activities table, added audit notification procedure, added notification to local officials procedure, updated references, created attachments list
06	08/11/2011	Updates to public participation and typographical errors
05	01/07/2011	Update outreach procedures
04	05/15/2008	Audit (YR2) 2007
03	06/29/2007	Audit (YR1) 2006
02	11/29/2004	2004 Issue
01	10/01/2004	Approval Draft
SR	01/30/2004	Issued for Status Review