

Brewery Operations Best Management Practices (BMPs)

BMPs protect the sewer system – and your bottom line

King County Industrial Waste (KCIW) works with industries to make sure their wastewater is properly treated and meets [requirements](#). This protects people, the environment, and the economy.

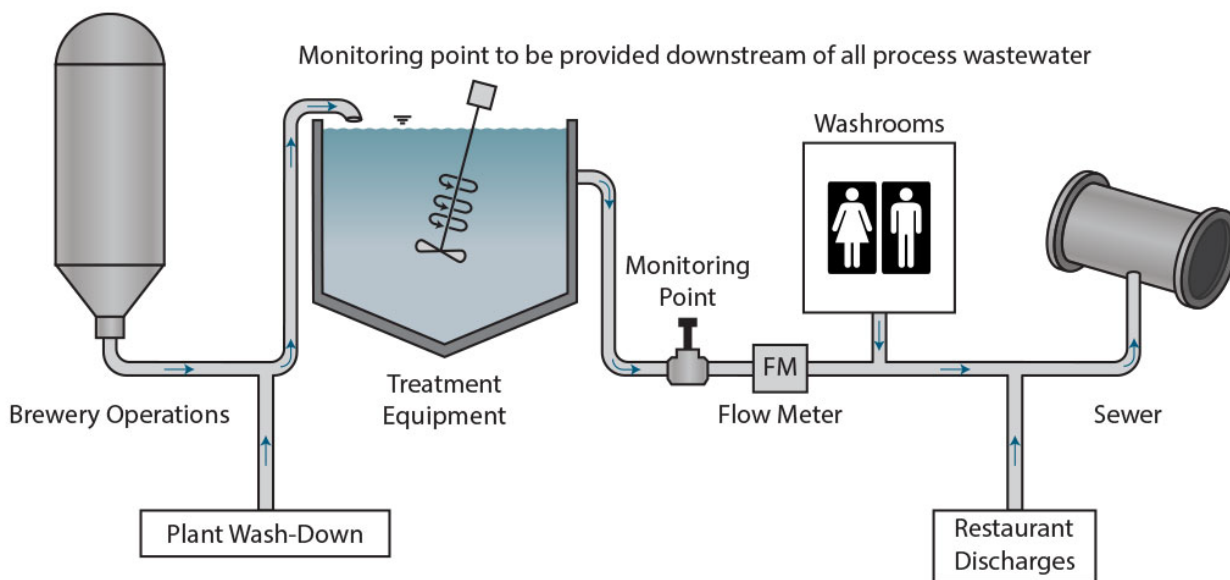
Wastewater from breweries may contain higher concentrations of organic matter than typical household wastewater. Businesses that send concentrated waste to the sewer system pay an extra surcharge fee because it costs more to treat this water.

To help breweries meet requirements and manage costs, King County has developed these BMPs for brewery wastewater. BMPs are activities, procedures, and features designed to minimize pollutants discharged to the sanitary sewer or released to the environment.

The requirements

- 1. Meet discharge limits:** All breweries that send their wastewater to the King County sewer system must make sure their wastewater meets the following [local discharge limits and prohibitions](#), summarized here and listed in [King County Code 28.84.060](#).
 - **Settleable Solids:** Wastewater must contain less than 7 milliliters per liter of solids capable of settling. Food waste, including food-grinder waste, must be capable of passing through a 1/4-inch sieve. Solids capable of settling can restrict or block flow in sewer lines. A company or facility that discharges solids that causes a sewage backup is liable for any damages.
 - **pH:** The pH of wastewater must remain between 5.0 and 12.0. Wastewater cannot fall between 5.0 and 5.5 for greater than 15 minutes. Wastewater that is too acidic or too alkaline can seriously corrode the sewer system, so the pH must be balanced.
 - **Temperature:** Wastewater must not exceed 65 Celsius (150 degrees Fahrenheit) at the point where it enters the public sewer system or 40 C (104 F) at the treatment plant influent. Brewery wastewater that is high in temperature can be a concern at King County's smaller treatment plants such as the City of Carnation and Vashon.
- 2. Apply for authorization, if needed:** Some businesses need permits or authorization to send their wastewater to the sewer. Breweries must [apply for authorization](#) if they meet the following criteria:
 - Produce 3,000 or more barrels of beer per year, or
 - Send 1,000 or more gallons of wastewater to the sewer each day, or
 - Are located in the Carnation or Vashon Treatment Plant Collection Zone.
- 3. Install a monitoring point, if needed:** To ensure their wastewater meets requirements, breweries that need formal authorization must have an easily accessible monitoring point. They must be able to collect samples that represent the discharge from the brewing operation in a location that is separate from sanitary and restaurant drains. See Figure 1. While small breweries may not always have a separate monitoring point, King County reserves the authority to require one. In the past, breweries that grew large enough to need formal authorization have had to remodel and replace plumbing to meet requirements.

Figure 1: Monitoring point is needed to sample brewery wastewater only, not other sources of wastewater.



Scale: NTS

The BMPs

The following BMPS are recommendations to help large and small breweries meet requirements. Small breweries may be able to meet requirements without implementing every BMP.

Solids management

Brewery operations must maintain compliance with King County’s [local limits](#). Industrial wastewater must contain less than 7 milliliters per liter of solids capable of settling and cannot contain substances that could restrict or block flow in sewer lines. Food waste, including food-grinder waste, must be capable of passing through a 1/4-inch sieve.

Tips for maintaining compliance with King County’s solids limits and prohibitions:

- Install screens, filters or baskets on all floor drains and trenches to capture solids.
- Prevent spent yeast, grains, hops, and trub from entering the sewer. Collect them from all filters, mash tuns, whirlpools, and kettles by settling, straining, screening or filtering them. Prevent them from entering the sanitary sewer.
- Use the correct gauge screen to maximize solids removal and install screens that are easy to access and service.
- Dewater collected solids and dispose off-site. Consider beneficial reuse.
- Collect spent yeast slurry for offsite disposal or beneficial reuse. If possible reuse the yeast for multiple generations. This is important because spent yeast slurry from fermentation / maturation tanks has high nutrient and high solids content. Large quantities of yeast lead to organic acids formation, which affects the pH (makes the effluent more acidic).
- Collect used filter media (e.g. diatomaceous earth) and dispose off-site or consider beneficial reuse.
- Control solids at the source; don’t let the solids hit the ground, sweep up and collect spills, and avoid rinsing them down the drain.
- Train employees on solids management practices.

Beneficial reuse
 When disposing solids offsite, consider beneficial reuse. Seek opportunities to turn your solids and high strength waste into compost, fertilizer, animal feed, energy, or other authorized beneficial reuse

Control pH

In general, brewery wastewater is acidic. However, cleaning processes can cause high and low spikes. Brewery operations must maintain compliance with [King County's pH discharge limits](#), which state that any wastewater having a pH less than 5.0 for any period (or between 5.0 and 5.5 for greater than 15 minutes), or greater than 12.0 or having corrosive property is prohibited from being discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Tips for maintaining compliance with the pH limits – see Figures 2 and 3 at the end of this document:

- Install totes, tanks or containers to adjust the pH of individual waste streams.
- Install a sufficiently sized tank to collect wastewater from all brewery operations for the purpose of self-neutralization and if necessary to adjust the pH to meet these limits.
- For small batches with slight excursions above pH 12, mild acids such as acetic acid (i.e., vinegar) or citric acid can be used to neutralize the wastewater.
- For small batches with slight excursions below pH 5.5, mild alkaline solutions, such as calcium carbonate (lime) can be used to neutralize the wastewater.
- Stronger acidic or alkaline neutralization chemicals may be needed based on the pH of the effluent and the volume of the wastewater to be neutralized.
- Provide a mechanical mixer in the wastewater tank to promote self-neutralizing of low and high pH wastewaters. Please note that adequate mixing is essential when using neutralizing chemicals.
- Reuse and recycle chemicals wherever possible through automated approaches (e.g., clean in place).
- Train employees on effluent pH management practices.

Product losses/off-spec product

Sending excessive amounts of high strength waste to the sewer can disrupt the sewer system and/or increase your high strength surcharge fees. Minimize the volume of unused and off-spec product discharged to the public sewer whenever possible. If there is no other alternative than the sewer, the discharge must meet [King County local limits](#).

In addition to collecting spent yeast, grains, hops and trub, collect the following high strength wastes and dispose off-site. Consider beneficial reuse for disposal:

- Off-spec and unused product
- Tank heels and initial rinse of brew tanks
- Beer & yeast lost in racking and transfer
- Beer lost in filtering, bottling, & kegging

Chemical storage and spill prevention

Provide secondary containment for chemical solutions such as cleaning and sterilization chemicals and waste materials to prevent the entry of these materials into the King County sewage system in case of accidental spills.

- Store chemical solutions in low traffic areas, away from forklifts and other production activities, to lessen the chance of an accidental spill.
- Segregate and securely store non-compatible chemicals (for example acids and bases) in separate containment areas to prevent mixing of incompatible or reactive materials.
- Maintain and inspect all process solution tanks on a regular basis and repair any leaks promptly.
- Label all chemical solution storage containers.
- Develop a spill response plan and train employees to follow the spill plan. Post the spill plan and the contact information for spill notification in a prominent place. The plan should at a minimum:
 - Describe where chemicals are stored, how liquids are stored and handled to prevent and isolate spills, and transfer protocols.

- Describe how staff will respond to a spill, including immediate notifications to emergency responders and King County Wastewater Treatment Division:
 - M-F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.: Industrial Waste Program 206-477-5300
 - After 5 p.m. and on weekends: South and East King County, Vashon Island 206-263-1760
 - After 5 p.m. and on weekends: Seattle and North King County 206-263-3801
- Describe staff training required to respond to spills safely and effectively.
- Update the plan as your processes change.

Records

Keep records to document your facility's compliance with requirements.

- Maintain records documenting off-site waste removal including waste stream, volume, date, and method of disposal of accumulated wastes.
- Maintain records of all effluent sample results collected to determine compliance with King County local limits.
- Retain records on site for a minimum of three years.

Considerations when planning for new or remodeled operation

Avoid expensive mistakes! When working on your facility layout, retain the services of an engineer experienced in design of brewery wastewater treatment systems and consider the following:

- All drains from brewing operations should lead to a common drain, sump or wastewater tank where the wastewater can be accessed and managed to ensure compliance with discharge limits.
- Control of pH is often necessary, and batch treatment to meet pH limits is still the best option for many small breweries. Necessary features typically include a tank, mixer, pH meter in tank (to control neutralizing chemicals), continuous pH meter (for the discharge), and a delivery system for the acids and bases used for neutralization. See Figures 2 and 3 at the end of this document.
- Set aside sufficient floor space for a wastewater pH equalization / treatment tank, treatment chemical containers, and solids handling equipment and storage.
- Provide an easily accessible sample site that is representative of the discharge from the brewing operation, separate from sanitary and restaurant drains. See Figure 1.
- Consider the method(s) and/or equipment you will use to measure wastewater discharge volume from the brewing operation.

Water Conservation

Conserving water can reduce wastewater and save money. Ways to conserve water include:

- Monitor your water usage by installing water meters in various areas of the operation; establish a baseline and set water saving goals.
- Use dry clean-up procedures prior to wet clean-up.
- Use water-efficient equipment, such as high pressure nozzles, clean-in-place systems, and water brooms. Find alternatives to water-cooled chilling equipment.

Additional examples of water conservation BMPs can be found in such documents as the Brewers Association's *Water and Wastewater: Treatment/Volume Reduction Manual*.

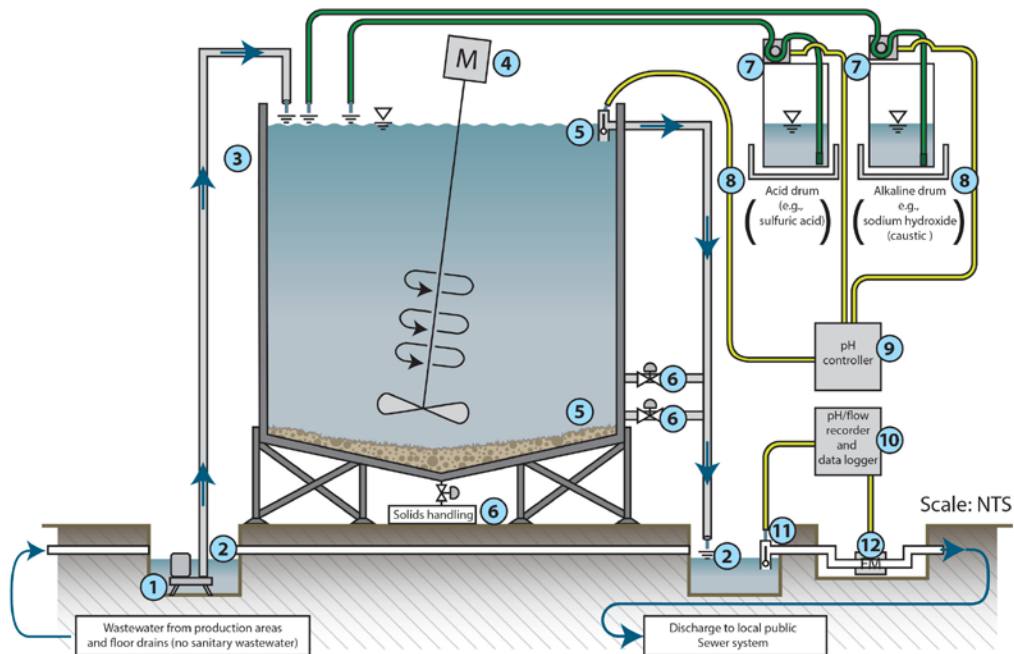
How can I get more information?

Check the web at www.kingcounty.gov/industrialwaste and search for "breweries."

Contact the program at: 206-477-5300 and TTY Relay: 711 or Info.KCIW@kingcounty.gov

Figure 2: pH neutralization for flow-through or multiple batch

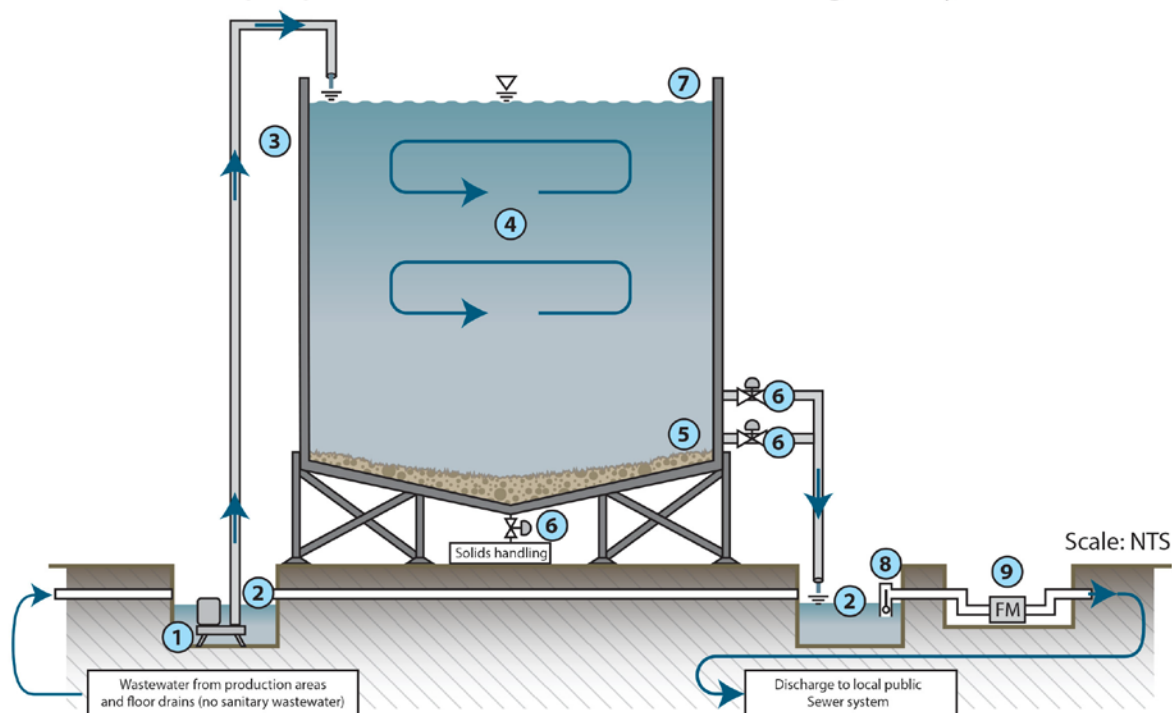
Brewery Wastewater BMP Guidance -
Example pH Neutralization Schematic - Flow-Through or Multiple Batch



- 1 Sump pump(s) with level controls set to prevent gravity overflow through the sewer outlet under peak flow conditions from the production area. Check valve and flow control valve not shown.
- 2 Sump or lift station with protective grating.
- 3 Tank for self-neutralizing of acidic and alkaline industrial wastewater and for adjusting pH by addition of concentrated neutralizing chemicals. Conical tank with stand shown. A flat-bottom tank can be used as well, but solids handling is a bit more labor-intensive. The piping and valving shown allows for the tank to be operated in flow-through mode through the upper overflow line or in batch decant mode through the lower decant lines.
- 4 Mechanical mixer with impeller or propeller blades to facilitate the neutralizing of acidic and alkaline industrial wastewaters. Mixer should be set at a slight angle and sized to turnover the tank volume at least a few times within the hydraulic retention time. Mixer mounting not shown to provide clarity to the schematic and as styles vary.
- 5 Controlling pH probe used, along with the pH controller (9), to regulate the delivery of neutralizing chemicals to the tank. The controlling pH probe can be moved to other locations within the tank based on the particular tank geometry and experience with what works best for stable pH control. For discharges in batch mode, the controlling pH probe needs to be a located where it can be constantly submerged.
- 6 Valves in a normally-closed position. Side decant valves to be opened when decanting the neutralized and clarified tank wastewater in batch decant mode. Tank bottom valve to be opened for removal of settled solids or for tank cleaning.
- 7 Chemical metering pump integrated with the controlling pH probe (5) through the pH controller (9). pH setpoints established to deliver acidic or alkaline concentrated neutralizing chemicals with a sufficient safety factor to ensure that the discharge pH probe (11) remains within local discharge limits.
- 8 Separate secondary containment for the concentrated acid and alkaline neutralizing chemicals.
- 9 pH controller integrated with the controlling pH probe (5) and chemical metering pumps (7).
- 10 pH and flow recorder and datalogger connected to the discharge pH probe (11) and flow meter (12) to monitor the pH and volume of the industrial wastewater discharged to the sanitary sewer. Any sanitary wastewater (e.g., restrooms, etc.) must enter downstream from the discharge pH probe (11) and flow meter (12).
- 11 Discharge pH probe positioned in a vented "T" to allow for ease of access and to remain constantly submerged.
- 12 Flow meter in valve box or other suitable structure with protective grating. The meter is to be installed per manufacturer's instructions and have datalogging capability. Ability for the flow meter to integrate with an autosampler to collect flow-proportioned samples also may be required for large volume dischargers.

Figure 3: pH neutralization for a single daily batch

Brewery Wastewater BMP Guidance - Example pH Neutralization Schematic - Single Daily Batch



- ① Sump pump(s) with level controls set to prevent gravity overflow through the sewer outlet under peak flow conditions from the production area. Check valve and flow control valve not shown.
- ② Sump or lift station with protective grating.
- ③ Tank for self-neutralizing of acidic and alkaline industrial wastewater and for adjusting pH by addition of concentrated neutralizing chemicals. Wastewater to be collected for an entire workday to allow for batch treatment and discharge at the end of the workday. Conical tank with stand shown. A flat-bottom tank can be used as well, but solids handling is a bit more labor-intensive. The piping and valving shown allows for the tank to be operated in batch decant mode through the lower decant lines.
- ④ Use a mechanical mixer or hand paddle (for small tanks) to facilitate the neutralizing of acidic and alkaline industrial wastewaters.
- ⑤ Test wastewater batch with a pH probe to regulate the delivery of neutralizing chemicals to the tank. The pH probe needs to be located where it can be constantly submerged.
- ⑥ Valves in a normally-closed position. Side decant valves to be opened when decanting the neutralized and clarified tank wastewater in batch decant mode. Tank bottom valve to be opened for removal of settled solids or for tank cleaning.
- ⑦ Neutralizing chemicals to be added manually or with aid of a chemical metering pump.
- ⑧ Discharge pH probe positioned in a vented "T" to allow for ease of access and to remain constantly submerged during batch discharge.
- ⑨ Flow meter in valve box or other suitable structure with protective grating. The meter is to be installed per manufacturer's instructions and have datalogging capability.