

Environmental Compliance and Sustainable Practices for Your Brewery: Going Green and Brewing Gold

Environmental compliance and sustainable practices are a win-win for your brewery: they're good for both your business's public image and bottom line. Whether you are entering the market, moving to a new location, or expanding production, you will want to ensure that your business is complying with local, state, and federal environmental laws and regulations while also minimizing water and energy use. This article highlights environmental permitting issues that should be on your radar. A future article will address the environmental considerations that accompany demolition and remodeling projects.

Brewing beer is a water-intensive process: from watering the hops to cleaning the tanks, one gallon of beer takes, on average, seven gallons of water to produce. Breweries have several environmental compliance obligations and should be prepared to fully comply with the applicable environmental requirements listed below-and more. The types of environmental permits required and other considerations depend on the size of the brewery and its location, and might include:

- Reliability and sustainability of incoming water supply source
 - Private wells (install or abandon)
 - Public water
 - Public water lines
 - Shared water lines
 - High capacity wells
- Discharge issues
 - Discharges to septic systems and publicly owned treatment works ("POTWs")
 - Municipal wastewater discharge permits
 - Septic system permits

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- National or state pollutant discharge elimination system permits
- Disposal issues
 - Solid waste permits
 - Hauling to solid waste facilities/anaerobic digesters
 - Composting
 - Land application
 - Transfer to farmers
- Storm water permits
- Land use permits, land disturbing activities, and zoning issues
- Construction/operation permits
- Water rights permits

Finally, breweries should consider taking steps to exceed their compliance obligations. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's 12-year-old Green Tier program provides support for businesses in their quest to develop innovative solutions, including creating strategies for businesses to be more competitive, profitable and sustainable. The one-on-one assistance coupled with sector-based support and partner-driven values helps stimulate environmental performance and economic gain. There are currently nine brewing sector participants (that is, breweries, coffee roasters, and product suppliers) in the Green Tier program. For more information on environmental and green energy incentives, one of our [previous articles](#) explores programs that allow your brewery to obtain financial and technical support.

Whether or not you're a Green Bay Packers fan, this is one type of green and gold you'll want your brewery to wear. If you have questions about environmental compliance or regulations, contact your Reinhart attorney or any member of the Brewery, Distillery and Winery team or Environmental Permitting and Regulatory Approvals team.

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