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City passed environmental inspections with high marks

By [Gail Krueger](#)
[Savannah Morning News](#)

If a report card had been given, the city of Savannah would have gotten almost straight A's after a state Environmental Protection Division inspection of all its permitted facilities.



-- John Carrington/Savannah Morning News

Lab technician Shari Haynes performs quality control titrations on water samples taken from the Industrial & Domestic Supply Water Treatment Plant.

"Top of the line technology at all facilities and real professional people make the city one of the best," said Robert Benton, an EPD environmental specialist who oversaw the mass inspection.

In April, EPD investigated 15 city facilities -- four wastewater treatment plants, eight water supply systems, the Dean Forest landfill, the city incinerator, various underground tanks and the lead abatement program. A draft version of the inspection report is now available.

With the exception of a few paperwork glitches and some misplaced sludge ash from the President Street Water Quality Control plant, the city passed the mass environmental checkup with flying colors.

The city's water department -- which supplies drinking water from the Floridan Aquifer through wells and from the Port Wentworth river water treatment plant and which handles treatment of waste water from the city's sewage system -- won particular praise from the inspectors.

"We felt real good about it," said Harry Jue, head of the city's water department. "I don't expect anything less than that."

EPD called the water department "very well run and operated" in the voluminous report, which fills an over-sized three-ring binder to the bursting point.

The inspection covered every aspect of environmental compliance for any city-operated facility with a state or federal permit.

Paperwork was checked as closely as water filtration systems, according to Benton.

The idea is to complete all inspection processes at once with an inspection team -- in the old days each facility would have gotten a separate inspection and a separate report. The new method saves time and gives the city a complete picture of how it's doing, Benton said.

EPD did ask the water department to not use sludge ash from the President Street plant as road base at its Southside Wilshire-Windsor wastewater treatment station -- an action that was done on a one-time basis. Jue said his department would comply at once.

The ash is the inert residue left over after bio-solids from the wastewater treatment process are burned. It compacts nicely as a road base, but the water department does not have a permit to use it that way.

The city was also cited for not changing out a diesel fuel storage tank at Fire Station No. 6 on Liberty Parkway to meet December's deadline for installing leak-proof underground fuel storage tanks. The tank was used to store fuel for a backup generator used in times of power outages.

The city is now in the process of changing out the tank.

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