



# Waste Management

## in the Chemical and Petroleum Industries

ALIREZA BAHADORI



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# Waste Management in the Chemical and Petroleum Industries

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# **Waste Management in the Chemical and Petroleum Industries**

Dedicated to the loving memory of my Parents, grandparents, and to all  
who contributed so much to my work over the years.

# Preface

Oil and gas are major sources of energy and revenue for many countries today – their production has been described as one of the most important industrial activities in the twenty-first century – and obviously waste treatment and disposal assume a greater degree of importance in the petroleum, chemical processing, and unconventional oil and gas industries.

Wastewater quality and the quantity produced determine the means of disposal and the costs of disposal. Suspended solids, total dissolved solids, and oxygen demand of produced waters have the most impact on wastewater treatment.

Wastewater is a complex mixture of organic and inorganic compounds and the largest byproduct by volume generated during chemical processing and both conventional and unconventional oil and gas recovery operations. The potential of oilfield-produced water to be a source of freshwater for water-stressed oil-producing countries and increasing environmental concerns, in addition to stringent legislations on produced water discharge into the environment, have made produced water management a significant part of the oil and gas business.

In marginally economic coal bed projects, the water disposal costs and attendant environmental accounting are critical factors in the investment decision; water disposal costs can economically make or break a marginal project.

Before investing in a coal bed methane (CBM) process, multiple questions need to be answered concerning the water to be produced – questions concerning quantity, flow-rates, chemical content, disposal means, monitoring, and environmental regulations. Perhaps no other factor affects the economics and feasibility of CBM projects as much as water removal and disposal.

In heavy oil production, between 2 to 4.5 volume units of water are used to produce each volume unit of synthetic crude oil in an ex situ mining operation. Despite recycling, almost all of it ends up in tailings ponds. However, in Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD) operations, 90–95% of the water is recycled and about 0.2 volume units of water is used per volume unit of bitumen produced.

A major hindrance to the monitoring of oil sands-produced waters has been the lack of identification of individual compounds present. By better understanding the nature of the highly complex mixture of compounds, including naphthenic acids, it may be possible to monitor rivers for leachate and also to remove toxic components. Such identification of individual acids has for many years proved impossible, but a recent breakthrough in analysis has begun to reveal what is in the oil sands-produced waters.

The extraction and use of shale gas can affect the environment through the leaking of extraction chemicals and waste into water supplies, the leaking of greenhouse gasses during extraction, and the pollution caused by the improper processing of natural gas.

A challenge to preventing pollution is that shale gas extractions vary widely in this regard, even between different wells in the same project; the processes that reduce pollution sufficiently in one extraction may not be enough in another.

Chemicals are added to the water to facilitate the underground fracturing process that releases natural gas. Fracturing fluid is primarily water and approximately 0.5% chemical additives (friction reducer, agents countering rust, agents to kill microorganisms). Since (depending on the size of the area) millions of liters of water are used, this means that hundreds of thousands of liters of chemicals are often injected into the soil.

Only about 50 to 70% of the resulting volume of contaminated water is recovered and stored in above-ground ponds to await removal by tanker. The remaining “produced water” is left in the earth where it can lead to contamination of groundwater aquifers, though the industry deems this “highly unlikely.” However, the wastewater from such operations often leads to foul-smelling odors and heavy metals contaminating the local water supply above-ground.

This book unravels the essential requirements for the process design and engineering of the equipment and facilities pertaining to the wastewater treatment units, solid waste disposal, and wastewater sewer systems of oil and gas refineries, chemical plants, oil terminals, petrochemical plants, unconventional oil and gas industries (coal seam gas or coal bed methane, shale gas and oil sands production), and other facilities as required. Included within the scope are:

- Liquid and solid disposal systems.
- Primary oil/solids removal facilities.
- Further oil and suspended solids removal (secondary oil/solids removal), such as dissolved air flotation units.
- Granular media filters and chemical flocculation units.
- Chemical addition systems.
- Biological treatments.
- Filtration and/or other final polishing.
- Sewage systems handling domestic and medical sanitary appliances of buildings.
- Drainage systems carrying surface and rainwater.
- Wastewater gathering systems.
- Clean water drainage, e.g., from buildings and paved areas.
- Evaporation ponds and disposal by natural percolation into the subsoil in permeable ground.
- Sanitary sewage treatment.
- Sludge handling and treatment.

It is obvious that the aim of any drainage/effluent disposal system should be to segregate uncontaminated water from contaminated water or effluents and to segregate different types of effluents in order to reduce the size, complexity, and costs of any treatment units that may be required for handling the contaminated water and effluents before they are discharged from a unit.

All wastewater effluents from industry that are discharged to public and/or natural water sources or directed for recycling purposes inside the industry, and that may contain a wide variety of matters in solution or suspension, should be controlled according to the requirements imposed by the final destination. However, in any case, elimination of the waste or the hazard potential of the waste should be the ultimate goal in the management.

Under no circumstances should effluent water cause oil traces on the surface or embankments of the receiving water, or affect the natural self-purification capacity of the receiving water to such an extent that it would cause hindrance to other users.

Under no conditions should polluted streams be combined with unpolluted streams if the resultant stream will then require purification. In general, the main sewer systems in the industry will be segregated according to the following categories:

- Stormwater sewer systems.
- Oily water sewer systems.
- Non-oily water sewer systems.
- Chemical sewer systems.
- Sanitary sewer systems.
- Special sewer systems.

In all areas, including process, offsite, and utility units, provisions should be made to anticipate any of the above mentioned sewer systems as required.

The treatment of wastewaters involves a sequence of treatment steps. Each wastewater treatment process involves the separation of solids from water in at least some part of the operation and the removal of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) to some extent.

The end of pipe treatment sequence can be divided into the following elements: primary or pre-treatment, intermediate treatment, secondary treatment and tertiary treatment plus ancillary, sludge dewatering, and disposal operations.

The key to optimizing the treatment sequence for provision of maximum water treatment at minimum cost is to identify the rule of each unit operation and optimize that operation. Optimizing the performance of specific unit operations, such as API separators, dissolved air flotation, biological treatment, etc., can best be achieved if:

1. The properties of influent streams are considered.
2. The chemical principles that are used in solids pre-treatment are understood.
3. The variety of chemicals available for solids treatment is recognized.
4. The properties of effluent water are established based on the local environmental regulations and final disposal.
5. The protocols for quantifying results are identified.

In general, most industries require water for processing or other purposes; much of this water after use is discharged either to public and/or natural water sources or directed for recycling purposes inside the industry.

Such discharge, which may contain a wide variety of matter in solution or suspension, should be controlled according to the requirements imposed by the final destination and/or environmental regulations.

Moreover, according to the type of plant and the method of plant operation, the sources of solids in a wastewater treatment plant can be uncovered. Solids may also be formed by interaction of waste streams in the sewer.



Wastewaters contain metal ions, such as iron, aluminium, copper, magnesium, and so on, from corrosion of the process equipment, chemicals used in treating cooling water, salts in the water intake, and chemicals used in processing.

Insoluble metal hydroxide floc may be formed when alkaline wastes are discharged and raise the pH of wastewater above neutral. The wastes, containing considerable concentrations of phenols, sulfides, emulsifying agents, and alkalines, should be segregated. In general, discharging any material to the oily sewer system or other drainage system should be investigated in line with the final waste treatment and disposal targets.

In view of the above, this book will unravel the fundamental engineering for waste recovery, treatment, and disposal systems in the petroleum, chemical, and unconventional oil and gas processing industries. These new fundamental discoveries will enable the development of practical solutions to these pressing environmental issues.

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# Biography

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He is the author of over 200 articles and 6 books. His books have been accepted/published by prestigious publishers such as John Wiley & Sons, Springer, Taylor & Francis and Elsevier. Dr Bahadori is the recipient of highly competitive and prestigious Australian Government's Endeavour International Postgraduate Research award as part of his research in oil and gas area. He also received top-up award from State Government of Western Australia through Western Australia Energy research Alliance (WA:ERA) in 2009. Dr Bahadori Serves as a member of editorial board for a number of journals such as *Journal of Sustainable Energy Engineering* which is published by Wiley-Scrivener.

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<i>Biography</i>	xxi
<b>1 Wastewater Treatment</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Characteristics of Wastewaters	1
1.1.1 Suspended Solids	2
1.1.2 Heavy Metals	2
1.1.3 Dissolved Inorganic Solids	4
1.1.4 Toxic Organic Compounds	4
1.1.5 Surfactants	6
1.1.6 Priority Pollutants	6
1.1.7 Volatile Organic Compounds	6
1.2 Treatment Stages	7
1.2.1 Sources of Wastewater	8
1.2.2 Discharge Options and Quality Requirements	8
1.2.3 Preliminary Wastewater Treatment	9
1.2.4 Primary Wastewater Treatment	9
1.2.5 Conventional Secondary Wastewater Treatment	9
1.2.6 Nutrient Removal or Control	9
1.2.7 Advanced Wastewater Treatment/Wastewater Reclamation	10
1.2.8 Toxic Waste Treatment/Specific Contaminant Removal	10
1.2.9 Sludge Processing	10
1.3 Treatment Processes	11
1.3.1 Selection of Treatment Processes	14
1.4 Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) in Wastewater Systems	22
1.4.1 Determination of the COD	23
1.4.2 Calculation of Theoretical Oxygen Demand	23
<b>2 Physical Unit Operations</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 Flow Measurement	25
2.2 Screening	25
2.3 Comminution	28
2.4 Grit Removal	28
2.5 Gravity Separation	29
2.5.1 General	29

2.5.2	Application	30
2.5.3	Oil–Water Separator General Design Considerations	30
2.5.4	Conventional Rectangular Channel (API) Separators	31
2.5.5	Parallel-Plate Separators	43
2.5.6	Oil Traps	45
2.5.7	Oil Holding Basins	46
2.6	Flow Equalization	46
2.6.1	Application and Location	46
2.6.2	Volume Requirements	48
2.7	Mixing	48
2.7.1	Description and Type	48
2.7.2	Application	48
2.8	Sedimentation	49
2.8.1	Sedimentation Theory	49
2.8.2	Application and Type	51
2.8.3	Design Considerations	53
2.8.4	Number of Basins	53
2.8.5	Inlet Arrangements	54
2.8.6	Short-Circuiting	54
2.8.7	Outlet Arrangements	54
2.8.8	Detention Time	54
2.8.9	Surface Loading Rate	54
2.8.10	Factors Affecting Sedimentation	55
2.9	Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF)	56
2.9.1	General	56
2.9.2	System Configuration	57
2.9.3	Variables Affecting DAF Efficiency	58
2.9.4	Treatability Testing	59
2.9.5	Design Considerations	59
2.9.6	Instruments and Control	64
2.9.7	Piping	65
2.9.8	Chemical Facilities	65
2.9.9	Material	65
2.9.10	Estimation of Air Concentration in Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) Systems	66
2.10	Granular-Media Filters	71
2.10.1	General	71
2.10.2	Filter Types and Applications	72
2.10.3	System Design Parameters	74
2.10.4	Cycle Time	76
2.10.5	Vessels and Appurtenances	77
2.10.6	Instrumentation and Controls	78
<b>3</b>	<b>Chemical Treatment</b>	<b>81</b>
3.1	Introduction	81
3.1.1	Chemical Precipitation	81
3.1.2	Chemical Coagulation	81

3.1.3	Chemical Oxidation and Advanced Oxidation	82
3.1.4	Ion Exchange	82
3.1.5	Chemical Stabilization	84
3.2	Definition and Application	84
3.2.1	Activated Carbon Adsorption	85
3.3	Chemical Precipitation	87
3.4	Chemical Flocculation	87
3.4.1	Definition and Applications	88
3.4.2	Design Considerations	90
3.4.3	Clarifier	90
3.4.4	Chemical Addition Systems	93
3.5	Disinfection	94
3.5.1	Chemical Agents	95
3.5.2	Mechanical Means	95
3.6	Chlorination	95
3.6.1	Application	96
3.6.2	Chlorine Dosages	96
3.6.3	Design Considerations	96
<b>4</b>	<b>Biological Treatment</b>	<b>99</b>
4.1	Theory	99
4.1.1	Biological Activated Carbon Process	101
4.1.2	Biokinetic Theoretical Model	102
4.2	Biological Treatment Processes	104
4.2.1	Major Differences in Aerobic and Anaerobic Treatment	106
4.2.2	Aerobic Processes	107
4.2.3	Anaerobic Waste Treatment	112
4.2.4	Aerobic, Anaerobic (Facultative) Waste Treatment	112
4.3	Activated-Sludge Units	112
4.3.1	Applications	113
4.3.2	Effects of Activated-Sludge	114
4.3.3	Feed Composition	115
4.3.4	Process Design	120
4.3.5	Design Considerations	120
4.4	Trickling-Filters	123
4.4.1	Trickling-Filter Process Design	124
4.5	Rotating Biological Contactor System	126
4.6	Sewage Oxidation Ponds	126
<b>5</b>	<b>Wastewater Treatment in Unconventional Oil and Gas Industries</b>	<b>129</b>
5.1	Background	129
5.1.1	Dissolved and Dispersed Hydrocarbon Components	131
5.1.2	Dissolved Mineral	131
5.1.3	Production Chemicals	131
5.1.4	Produced Solids	132
5.1.5	Dissolved Gases	132

5.2	Toxicity Limitations of Coal Bed Water	132
5.3	Shale Gas and Coal Seam Gas Produced Water, Treatment and Disposal	135
5.3.1	Evaporation Pond	136
5.3.2	Surface Stream Disposal	136
5.3.3	Ion Exchange	138
5.3.4	Membrane Filtration Technology	138
5.3.5	Freeze–Thaw Evaporation	140
5.3.6	Adsorption	140
5.3.7	Chemical Oxidation	140
5.3.8	Filtration	141
5.3.9	Constructed Wetlands	141
5.3.10	Electrodialysis/Electrodialysis Reversal	141
5.3.11	Deep Well Injection at Dedicated Onshore Sites	141
5.3.12	Biological Aerated Filters	142
5.3.13	Macro-Porous Polymer Extraction Technology	143
5.3.14	Thermal Technologies	143
5.4	Re-Thinking Technologies for Safer Facing	147
5.5	Water Treatment for Oil Sands Mining	153
5.5.1	Recycling and Water Treatment Options	153
5.5.2	Oily Water Treatment in Oil Sands Mining	155
<b>6</b>	<b>Wastewater Sewer Systems</b>	<b>161</b>
6.1	Stormwater Sewer System	162
6.2	Oily Water Sewer System	162
6.3	Non-Oily Water Sewer System	163
6.4	Chemical Sewer System(s)	164
6.4.1	Disposal of Chemical Sewers	164
6.4.2	Neutralization Systems	164
6.4.3	Type of Chemical Wastes	164
6.5	Sanitary Sewer System	165
6.6	Special Sewer Systems	165
6.7	Effluent Sources and Disposals	165
6.8	Particular Effluents in Refinery and Petrochemical Plants	167
6.8.1	Caustic Scrubs (Heavy Oils)	167
6.8.2	Desalter Wastewater	168
6.8.3	Foul or Sour Waters	168
6.8.4	Spent Caustic Solutions	168
6.8.5	MTBE or Leaded Contaminated Streams	170
6.8.6	Benzene Contaminated Streams	171
6.8.7	Spent Sulfuric Acid Products	171
6.8.8	Nitrogen Base Components	172
6.8.9	Cyanides	172
6.8.10	Aluminum Chloride	173
6.8.11	Polyelectrolyte	173
6.8.12	Ferric Chloride	173
6.8.13	Phosphoric Acid	173

6.8.14	Hydrofluoric Acid	173
6.8.15	Other Spent Catalysts	173
6.8.16	Chemical Cleaning Wastes	174
6.8.17	Sulfur Solidification and Crushing Facilities and Loading Systems Drainage	174
6.8.18	Water Containing Solids, Emulsifying Agents, etc.	174
6.8.19	Heavy Viscous Oils Drainage	174
6.8.20	Toxic Metal Contaminated Streams	174
6.8.21	Solvent Processes Drainage	174
6.8.22	Treating Processes Drainage	175
6.9	Petrochemical Plants' Special Effluents	175
6.9.1	Summary of Disposal/Treatment Methods	175
6.10	NGL, LNG, and LPG Area Effluents	178
6.10.1	Liquefied Gas Spill	178
6.11	Gas Treatment Facilities' Effluents	178
6.12	Effluents from Terminals, Depots, and Product Handling Areas	178
6.13	General Considerations and Conditions for Release of Wastes	178
6.13.1	Characteristics and Composition of Waste	179
6.13.2	Characteristics of the Discharge Site and Receiving Environment	179
6.13.3	Availability of Waste Technologies	180
6.14	Effluent Wastewater Characteristics	180
6.14.1	Flow	180
6.14.2	Temperature	181
6.14.3	pH	181
6.14.4	Oxygen Demand	181
6.14.5	Phenol Content	182
6.14.6	Sulfide Content	182
6.14.7	Oil Content	182
6.14.8	Light Hydrocarbon Solubility in Water	182
6.14.9	Predicting Water-Hydrocarbon System Mutual Solubility	185
6.15	Wastewater Emissions	189
6.15.1	Point Source Discharge	189
6.15.2	Effluent Permissible Concentrations	193
<b>7</b>	<b>Sewage Treatment</b>	<b>195</b>
7.1	Sewage Effluents	196
7.1.1	Receiving Water	196
7.1.2	Final Effluents of Domestic Wastewater Plants	197
7.2	Methods of Sewage Treatment: General	197
7.2.1	Conventional Methods	197
7.3	Choice of System: General	197
7.4	Design of Sewage Treatment Plants: General Guidances	198
7.5	Design of Small Sewage Treatment Plants	198
7.5.1	Collection of Information	198
7.6	Preliminary Treatment	200



7.7	Primary and Secondary Settlement Tanks	200
7.7.1	Capacities of Primary Settlement Tanks	201
7.8	Sludge Digesters	202
7.9	Drying Beds	202
7.9.1	Secondary Settlement Tanks	203
7.10	Biological Filters	204
7.10.1	Distribution	205
7.10.2	Volume of Filter	205
7.10.3	Mineral Filter Media	206
7.11	Activated-Sludge Units	207
7.12	Tertiary Treatment (Polishing) Processes	207
7.13	Disposal of Final Effluent	207
7.14	Advanced Wastewater Treatment	208
7.14.1	Effects of Chemical Constituents in Wastewater	208
7.14.2	Advanced Wastewater Treatment Operations and Processes	209
7.15	Effluent Disposal and Reuse	212
7.15.1	Direct and Indirect Reuse of Wastewater	212
<b>8</b>	<b>Solid Waste Treatment and Disposal</b>	<b>215</b>
8.1	Basic Considerations	215
8.1.1	Classification	215
8.1.2	Methodology	215
8.1.3	Sources	216
8.1.4	Characteristics	219
8.1.5	Quantities	223
8.2	Sludge Handling, Treatment, and Reuse	223
8.2.1	General	223
8.2.2	Sludge and Scum Pumping	223
8.2.3	Sludge Piping	226
8.2.4	Preliminary Operation Facilities	229
8.2.5	Thickening (Concentration)	230
8.3	Stabilization	233
8.3.1	Design Considerations	233
8.3.2	Lime Stabilization	233
8.3.3	Heat Treatment	234
8.3.4	Anaerobic Sludge Digestion	235
8.3.5	Composting	236
8.4	Conditioning	237
8.5	Disinfection	237
8.6	Dewatering	237
8.6.1	Sludge Dewatering Methods	238
8.6.2	Vacuum Filtration	238
8.6.3	Centrifugation	238
8.6.4	Belt Filter Press	238
8.6.5	Sludge Drying Beds	241
8.6.6	Lagoons	241