

401 Certification Process Flowchart

A coordinated roadmap for Sovereign Lands, Flood Plains, Section 401, and USACE Section 10/404 authorizations for projects proposing to discharge fill (e.g. rock, soil, rip rap) into a Water of the United States (WOTUS).

Phase I: Pre-Filing, State Sovereign Lands & Flood Plains, and Federal Submissions

1. Sovereign Lands & Flood Plains Review (PERMT Portal)

Determine if your project intersects state-owned meandered rivers, lakes, public lands, or mapped floodplains. Submit a Joint Application through the state's [PERMT portal](#). Note: Sovereign Lands construction permits/leases and/or Flood Plain Development permits may or may not be needed depending entirely on your specific project location and physical scope. This process does not determine if a Section 10/404 permit and/or an individual 401 certification is required.

2. Submit Federal Application via USACE RRS

Register and submit your Section 10/404 permit application package via the Army Corps of Engineers [Regulatory Request System \(RRS\)](#). You must possess a Login.gov account to access the system. Your RRS application runs concurrently with the state evaluations. The Army Corps of Engineers will determine if an individual 401 certification is required.

3. Section 401 Pre-Filing Meeting Request

Timeline: Mandatory 30-Day Wait

Submit a [formal "Request for a Pre-Filing Meeting"](#) to the Iowa DNR Section 401 WQC team. By law, this request must occur at least 30 calendar days before submitting a formal application for Water Quality Certification. DNR will evaluate if a meeting is necessary during this window.

Submit to: Section401WQC@dnr.iowa.gov

Phase II: Formal Water Quality Certification

4. Submit Formal Section 401 Certification Request

Timeline: 45 - 90 Days

Once the 30-day pre-filing wait period from Step 3 has elapsed, you may submit your [formal request for Section 401 Water Quality Certification \(WQC\)](#) directly to the DNR. To complete this step, applicants will simply complete and submit the remaining sections of the same Section 401 application form initiated during the Phase I pre-filing request. Depending on project specifics, this phase includes a mandatory 30-day public notice comment window.

Submit to: Section401WQC@dnr.iowa.gov

Phase III: Final Approvals & Project Authorization

5. Receive All Authorizations & Construct

Timeline: Permit Issuance

DNR transmits the completed Section 401 WQC to you and the USACE. Once USACE receives the 401 certification, and your Sovereign Lands / Flood Plain Permits are finalized and signed (if required), USACE will issue their formal Section 404/10 permit verification. Do not commence physical construction until all authorizations are officially in hand.

IMPORTANT COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

Starting construction or placing fill in WOTUS, floodplains, or sovereign lands before obtaining all required permits may result in delays, enforcement actions, or penalties. Please wait until all formal authorizations are in hand before beginning work. Local regulations may also apply.

Iowa DNR Contacts

Sovereign Lands: 515-330-6432

Flood Plains: 515-725-8415 | floodplain-help@dnr.iowa.gov

Section 401 WQC: Section401WQC@dnr.iowa.gov

USACE Rock Island District

Regulatory Division: 309-794-5057

Email: IowaRegulatory@usace.army.mil