Mississippi DEQ Solid Waste Facility Reporting Program Guidance Document

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INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The MDEQ Waste Division is pleased to announce the 2019 launch of a new online reporting format for solid waste management facility annual reports. Historically, the data required for these reports has been submitted to the agency on hard copy forms; however, MDEQ's Waste Division has worked with Emerge Knowledge Design, Inc. (Emerge) to develop an online reporting system through Emerge's Re-TRAC Connect (Re-TRAC) platform. The Re-TRAC system will provide registered users (i.e. permittees) with a simple interface directing them to the precise annual report forms required for each corresponding permitted facility. Users will be able to easily navigate through the online form that allows the user to enter data electronically, to save their progress as data is entered, and to upload and/or attach additional documentation required as part of the reports. The new online reporting format is expected to improve consistency in facility reporting data, provide an easier method for timely submittal of reports, and streamline the annual reporting process for both the agency and regulated community.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

State solid waste laws and regulations require the owner of a solid waste management facility to submit an annual report to the MDEQ each year on or before February 28th detailing information on the solid waste disposal activities conducted during the preceding calendar year. Solid waste management facilities required to submit annual reports include commercial and noncommercial landfills and rubbish sites, transfer stations, processing facilities, composting facilities, and land application sites. Additionally, all holders of a Beneficial Use Determination (BUD) are also required to submit annual reports for their beneficial use activities in the state.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides an overview of the various features of the Re-TRAC system as well as points out some key functionalities that first-time users may not be quick to catch on to. The guidance and instructions all pertain to the overall use of the system and unless noted otherwise do not necessarily apply to specific facility forms (commercial landfill, transfer station, BUD, etc.).

REGISTRATION

At the moment, MDEQ is offering multiple ways to register with the system.

Method 1: Direct Registration

This method is suggested for users responsible for a single facility/BUD. Those required to report can use the direct link below to join the Mississippi DEQ Solid Waste Facility Reporting Program within Re-TRAC Connect.

https://connect.re-trac.com/registration/mdeq

Follow the directions in this link and you will be guided through how to register with the program and how to provide the appropriate information on the facility/BUD for which an annual report is required. MDEQ will review this information and assign the appropriate reporting forms within the program at which point a user will be able to navigate to the form, fill it out, and submit it to MDEQ.

Method 2: Request Program Access from MDEQ

This method is suggested for users responsible for multiple facilities/BUDs. To assist MDEQ with setting up a user account with all the associated facilities/BUDs for a single user, the following information must be submitted via email to cbock@mdeq.ms.gov:

- Email address of the person responsible for submittal of the annual report(s) needing program access
- Name of each facility/BUD for which responsible
- Permit/Authorization number for each facility/BUD for which responsible

Upon receipt of this information, MDEQ will create the account, assign the facilities and associated reporting forms, and provide the user with the login credentials to access the program.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a consultant or 3rd party representative that needs access to your electronic reporting form to help input or prepare the electronic submittal, you will need to provide a written request to MDEQ to grant access to that person(s). However, a duly authorized representative of the permittee must also register with the new online reporting system for the purposes of reviewing and signing the draft report prior to electronic submittal.

NAVIGATION

LOGGING IN

To log into the program use the following link.

https://connect.re-trac.com/login

As you will be using this every year and will mostly likely be signing into the program multiple times a year, it is suggested that you create a bookmark on this page in your browser.

When you follow the above link you will be taken to a login page that will look like the following image.
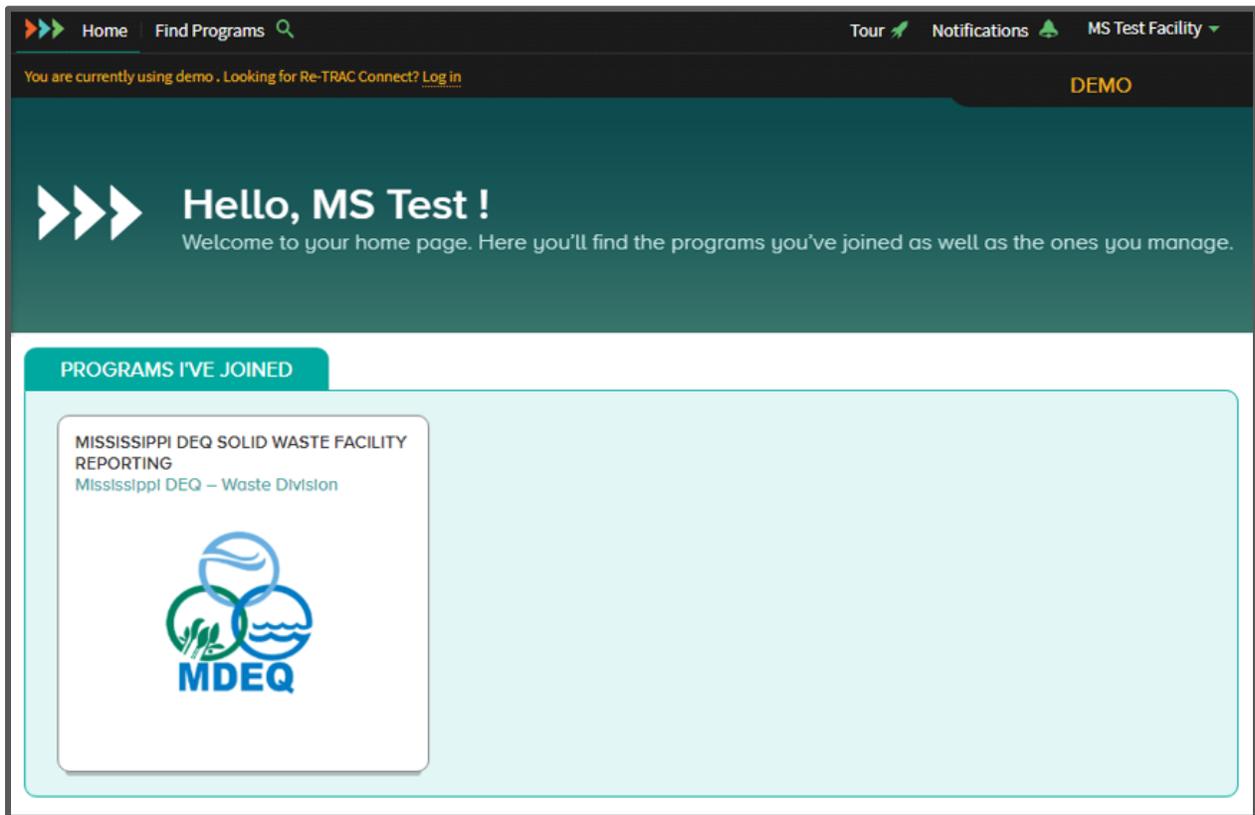
Figure 1: Login Screen
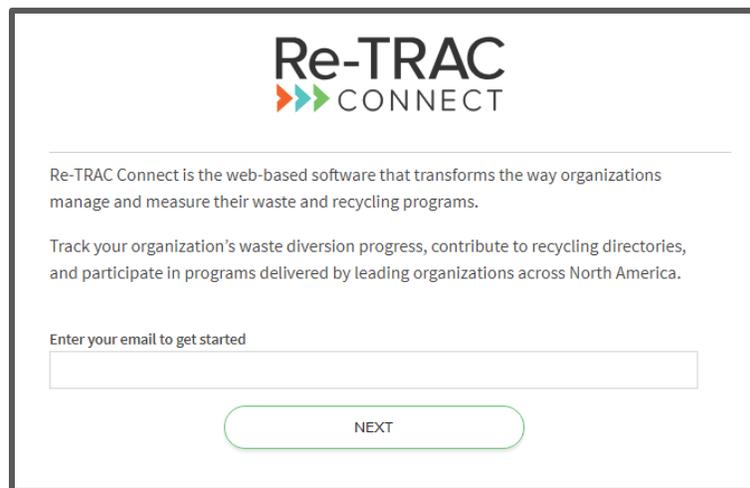
Enter the account email address, select the "Next" button, and then subsequently enter the associated password to login.

DASHBOARD

When you first login, you will be taken to your dashboard. Here you can take a tour of the site, manage your profile, access notifications, as well as view the programs that you have joined.

Figure 2: Dashboard

In order to access the MDEQ program, simply select the tile with MDEQ's logo and labeled "Mississippi DEQ Solid Waste Facility Reporting" as pictured above. Users that have registered with the Municipal Measurement Program for reporting recycling figures will also see that program as an option on this page.

MEMBERS

Once you have entered the program page you will be able to view each member that is associated with your profile. In the case of MDEQ's program, each member is representative of a permitted or authorized facility/activity. The members that are assigned to your profile will be listed on this page as shown below.

Figure 3: Member View

Additionally, if you wanted to add a permitted/authorized facility or activity, you can select the "Add Member" option above the list (circled red above). When you add a new member you will be taken to a registration page where you will enter the appropriate information. At this point, MDEQ will review the information, verify the member, and assign the associated reporting form, and the member will then be added to the listing shown in your member view.

WORKSPACE

In order to submit a report for a particular member (facility), select the facility for which you wish to report and you will be taken to the facility's workspace. On this workspace you will have access to the appropriate reporting form(s) for the facility. Immediately under the reporting form type, a status box will appear which will indicate to you the progress made on the reporting form. The various statuses that will show include "New," "Draft," "Completed," and

"Verified." These will be further distinguished by varying colors as shown below.

Figure 4: Workspace View and Status Examples

In order to access the reporting form, simply select the status box for the corresponding form.

If you are reporting for multiple facilities, then immediately under the title of this facility you can select the drop down circled below to easily switch between your facilities.

Figure 5: Switch Facility Example
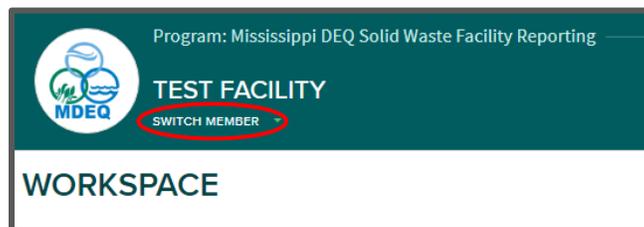
REPORTING FORMS

Once you have selected the reporting form you wish to fill out, you will be taken to a page similar to the one below.

Figure 6: Reporting Form

On this page you will be able to scroll down to see all the questions. For most facilities there are multiple pages associated with the report. In order to access the various pages you can select the page numbers located in the top right of your screen.

These page numbers, pictured below, have indicator boxes associated with each number. These boxes will change color based on the page's status.

Figure 7: Page Indicators
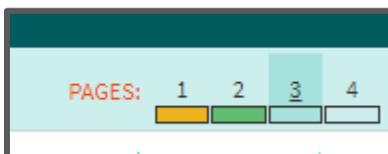
If a page has yet to be filled out (as in the case of page 3 and 4 above) then the box will be blank. However, if a page is saved as a draft without any errors then the page indicator box will be green (as in page 2 in the example above). If however, a draft is saved (as explained below) and there remains any errors or missing information, then the page indicator box will be shaded yellow (as

in page 1 in the example above). These indicators allow the user to quickly view which pages need attention and which ones have been satisfactorily filled out.

In the top left corner, you can also choose to exit the report to go back to the workspace. Before leaving, though, it is suggested that you be sure to save any work that you may have performed. In order to save your progress and maintain a draft report, scroll down to the bottom of your screen and select the "Save Draft" button.

Once all questions have been answered satisfactorily, there will also be a button at the bottom of the last page of the report which will ask if you want to "Mark Complete" the report. Only select this option if all questions have been answered and you are ready to submit the report to MDEQ. Once a report has been submitted, the user will not be able to change any answer. If a user realizes that a mistake has been made after the report has been marked complete, please contact MDEQ and we will unlock the report so that the changes can be made.

PLEASE NOTE: As with the hard copy submittals of annual reports, the reports must be signed by either a responsible official or duly authorized representative (as defined in your permit). As noted in the signature section at the end of each form, completion of the signature blanks constitutes a formal signature on behalf of the signatory. Any forms MDEQ reviews that are not signed by an appropriate signatory will not be approved.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Throughout each reporting form there are questions that require different types of answers. Each type of question that a user may encounter when completing a reporting form is listed in this section along with further instructions to make the new system easy for new users to navigate.

GENERAL

The first type of question is a basic text or number field. These will be represented by simple boxes as shown below.

Figure 8: General Question Example

Figure 9: General Question Example

Generally, these questions will accept any text or number (depending on the question). However, there are some fields that have specific formatting requirements that must be followed such as the "Phone:" field below.

Figure 10: General Question Formatting Example

In this example, the question will be flagged as incomplete until the formatting is correct. In this case, you will need to answer the question as such: 123-456-7891 instead of 1234567891.

Additionally, however, there are also some fields that do not have requirements but which do have some suggested formats such as below.

Figure 11: General Question Formatting Example

It helps the data gathering process and the organization of the data if these instructions are followed closely. If you have any questions about the format, though, please do not hesitate to reach out to MDEQ.

One final note on general fields is that some questions may have part of the answer already filled in for you if there is some uniformity across facilities. In the case below "RSO-" is filled in for the user to make it easier to fill out the certificate number as well as to suggest a desired format.

Figure 12: General Question Pre-Filled Example

However, if your answer does not match the suggested text already inserted, then you may delete the text and type your own answer.

SINGLE-CHOICE OPTION

The next question type is a Single-Choice Option. This question has a set number of answers and you must choose exactly one answer before moving on to the next question.

Figure 13: Single-Choice Option Question Example

In the case above, you may choose "Class I" or "Class II," but both options may not be selected.

In some cases, your answer may prompt further questions to appear making these reports dynamic depending on your answers. For instance, in the case

below, if "Yes" is selected then an additional question area would appear prompting you to upload other information.

Figure 14: Single-Option Dynamic Question Example

Figure 15: Multi-Choice Option Question Example

MULTI-CHOICE OPTION

The next question type is the Multi-Choice Option. This question, as the name implies, allows the user to select multiple answers before moving on. In these cases, the user should select each answer that is applicable to their facility.

Figure 15: Multi-Choice Option Question Example

DROP DOWN

Similar to Single-Choice Options, Drop Down questions allow the user to pick an answer from multiple options. The difference is that not all options are displayed at the same time. When the user selects the arrow next to the default answer, the options will appear below and you can select the appropriate answer.

In some cases the answers are many, as is the case when choosing the appropriate state.

Figure 16: Drop Down Many Options Question Example

In other cases, though, the Drop Down is a simple Yes/No.

Figure 17: Drop Down Yes/No Question Example

As these questions do have a default value, please pay close attention to make sure the correct option is selected so that you do not simply leave the default answer which may be incorrect.

TABLES

The next question type is Tables. Table formatting allows MDEQ to organize general questions into blocks which perform simple calculations and produce easily readable content on the back end.

If a particular cell is shaded gray, then that indicates to the user that it is non-editable. In most cases these cells are formulas which will automatically calculate the appropriate totals within the table.

Figure 18: Table Question Example

1. List the total amount of waste disposed within the permitted disposal area by source:

SOURCE	IN-STATE *	OUT-OF-STATE *	TOTAL
Tons of Waste Disposed			

In the case depicted in Figure 18, a user would fill in the In-State column and the Out-of-State column and the Total column will automatically sum the two others.

There are many cases when a user is able to add rows to a table. In the case of listing the sources of waste from which the facility may have received material, you can add or remove rows within the table by selecting "Remove" on the right side of the table associated with a particular row or by selecting the "Add" button immediately beneath the table (both are circled in red in Figure 19).

Figure 19: Dynamic Table Question Example

FILE UPLOAD

The final question type will be a File Upload area. Most of the additional items required by the annual report (lab analyses, survey results, etc.) can be submitted through the new online reporting system by uploading the files. With these questions, the user will be prompted to select a file to upload. In order to answer these questions, select "Choose File" and search for the document to upload as shown in the pictures below.

Figure 20: File Upload Question Example

Figure 21: File Upload Question Example

Note that as shown in Figure 21, the maximum file size that can be uploaded to the system is 5 megabytes (5MB). If the file needing to be uploaded is larger than this limit, try splitting it into multiple files/uploads or reducing the file size. If a document cannot be attached due to its type or size, please send the file electronically or physically to MDEQ.

ERRORS

In order to promote submittal of more accurate, complete, and consistent information in the annual reporting forms, this online system is designed to identify numerical discrepancies, blank answer fields, and improperly formatted answers. As a result users may encounter errors while completing a reporting form. As explained below, errors do not prevent continuation of the report; however, these errors must be corrected prior to final submittal of the online forms.

NAVIGATING REPORT FORMS CONTAINING ERRORS

To provide the user with ample awareness of errors contained in the reporting form, the user will be notified of errors at varying stages. Some errors (such as numerical errors) are immediately brought to the user's attention. Other errors, though, do not appear until the user attempts to save a draft or submit the actual report.

### CONTINUING THROUGH THE REPORT

If a user comes across an error while continuing through the report, the user has the option to go back and correct the error right then, or can continue

through the report, navigating to other questions or other pages as needed. No question that is flagged with an error will disallow a user from continuing on to other questions as the question can always be revisited at a later point.

SAVING A DRAFT

Taking a step further, if a user attempts to save a draft of the report, not only will the questions with errors be flagged, but a message will appear notifying the user of the number of errors within the report.

Figure 22: Message for Saving a Draft with Errors
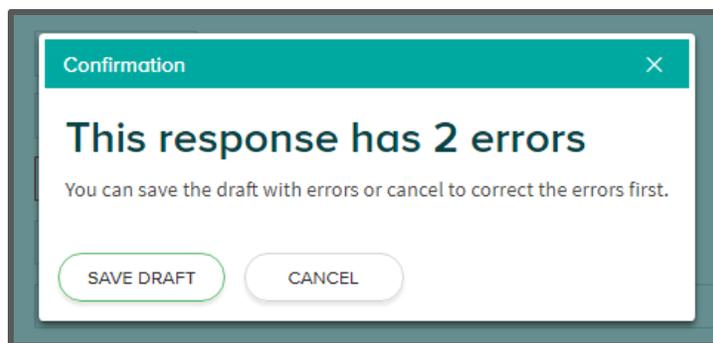
The message as shown in Figure 22 indicates that a user can go ahead and save the draft and it will save the progress up to that point, or the user can go back into the report and correct the errors at that time.

When the report is visited again to correct the errors/missing information, a user can navigate to the page which has a yellow indicator under the page number. As a confirmation that the report is missing information, the pages will be headed with the below message.

Figure 23: Warning Message Example
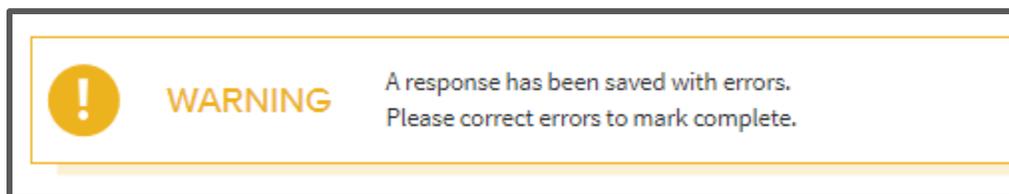
SUBMITTING THE REPORT

Up to this point, a user has been allowed to continue on to other questions or save a draft if errors occur. However, if a user attempts to mark a report complete, the system will not accept the submission until the errors are corrected. If a user attempts to mark a report complete that contains errors, then the below message will appear.

Figure 24: Error Message Before Marking Complete
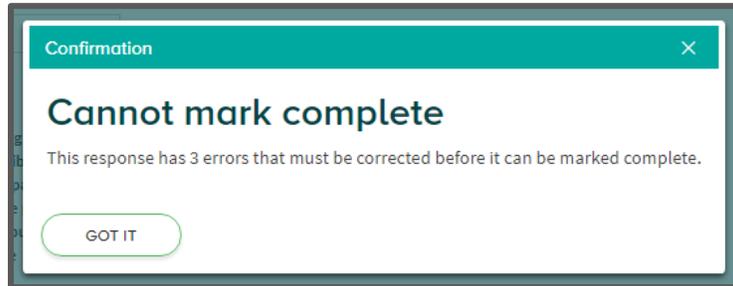
As mentioned before, the user will not be allowed to submit the report until the errors have been corrected. Read below to learn about the different types of errors.

REQUIRED FIELD ERRORS

In order to collect as much of the appropriate data as possible, the majority of all the questions are required fields. This means that if a user tries to save a draft of a report that is missing information on a required question, a message will appear notifying the user that the report contains errors.

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk and after a user attempts to save a draft or submit a report then the fields will be highlighted in red with a "Required" flag next to it as shown in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Required Information Error Message

As soon as the question is answered, the error flag will go away and you can continue to work on the report.

NUMERICAL ERRORS

The next error type a user will come across is a numerical error. There are rules built into the reporting forms that will generate errors when inconsistencies in the input values are detected. In the case of Figure 26 below, a user entered "500" for In-State tons, "600" for Out-of-State tons, and "200" as the total amount of waste received separated by source.

Figure 26: Numerical Error Example

Question 2 in the example requires the user to enter all of the sources from which the facility received waste. Since the user indicated in Question 1 that a total of 1,100 tons were received, the total waste listed by source should also equal this number. Since there is a discrepancy, an error is generated. Once the user enters the remaining source counties (Figure 27), the rule will be satisfied and the error message will go away.

Figure 27: Corrected Numerical Error Example

FORMATTING ERRORS

The final error type that a user may experience is a formatting error. These errors will appear when an answer has been inputted in an incorrect format. After the user attempts to answer these general questions and move on to the next question, an error flag will appear and indicate how the answer should be formatted. In the example given in Figure 28, the phone number is entered as "1234567891." While this has the correct number of digits, the system is generating an error because the phone number should be entered as "123-456-7891." If the hyphens are inserted correctly, the formatting rules will be satisfied and the user can move on to the next question.

Figure 28: Formatting Error Example

If at any point, you think an error message has been generating by mistake, please contact MDEQ and we will help you with the question.

SUBMISSION

Once all questions have been answered and there are no errors within the report, the user can navigate to the final page of the report and scroll to the bottom. At the bottom there will be a button which says "Mark Complete." Once this is selected the following message will appear.

Figure 29: Confirmation Message
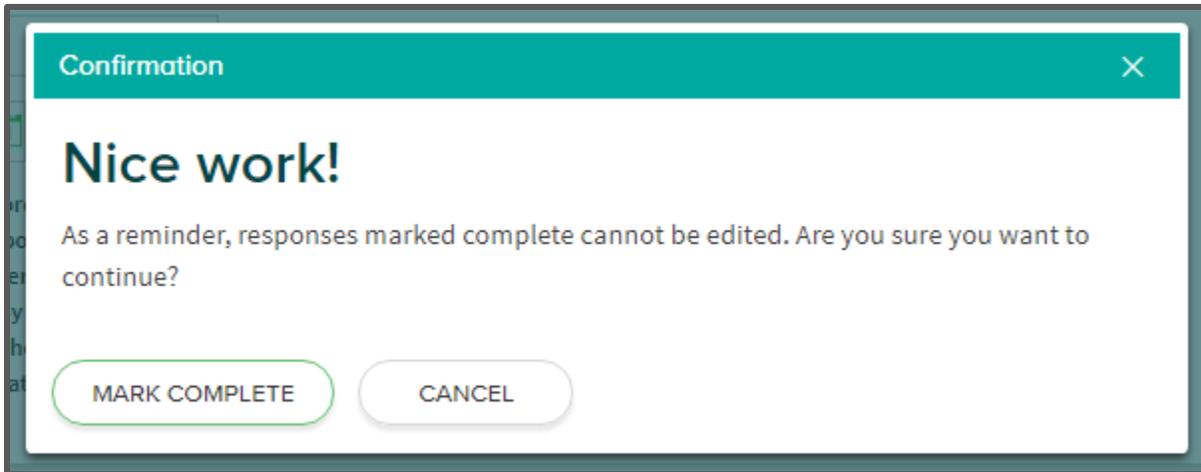
Please note that if a consultant or 3rd-party representatives are granted access to the reporting form to help prepare the submittal, they should not be the ones to mark a report complete and sign their names. Only a duly authorized representative of the facility should sign the last page of the report and submit the report to MDEQ for review.

As the message in the above figure states, though, once the report has been marked complete, the user can no longer make changes. If the user is certain that no changes need to be made, then select the "Mark Complete" button again and the report will then be submitted to MDEQ.

VERIFICATION PROCESS

Once the report is marked complete, MDEQ will be notified. MDEQ will then review the report for completeness and accuracy. If any questions arise during this review process, then you will receive a message concerning our thoughts.

If changes need to be made, then MDEQ will unlock the report by changing its status back to "Draft" at which point the user will be able to go back in and make the necessary changes.

If no changes need to be made to the report, then MDEQ will mark the report "Verified" and the user will know that no further action is required.

## SAVING AND/OR PRINTING REPORTING FORMS USING THE EXPORT FUNCTION

Users have the ability to export their reports to a file that can either be saved or printed. Within the report, immediately underneath the page numbers in the top right corner is an export drop down.

Figure 30: Export Drop Down
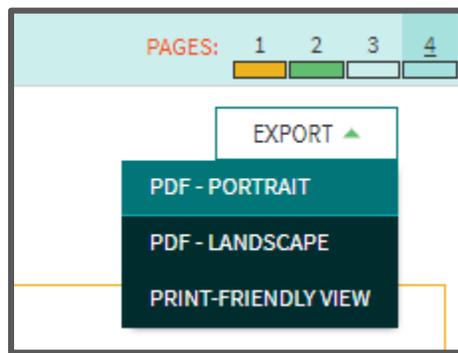
As Figure 30 shows, the user can export their report in multiple different formats that are ideal for viewing the submitted information. If a user would like to export their report in a different format (.xlsx, commonly known as an Excel file), then they will need to return to the facility's workspace page.

Figure 31: Workspace Page
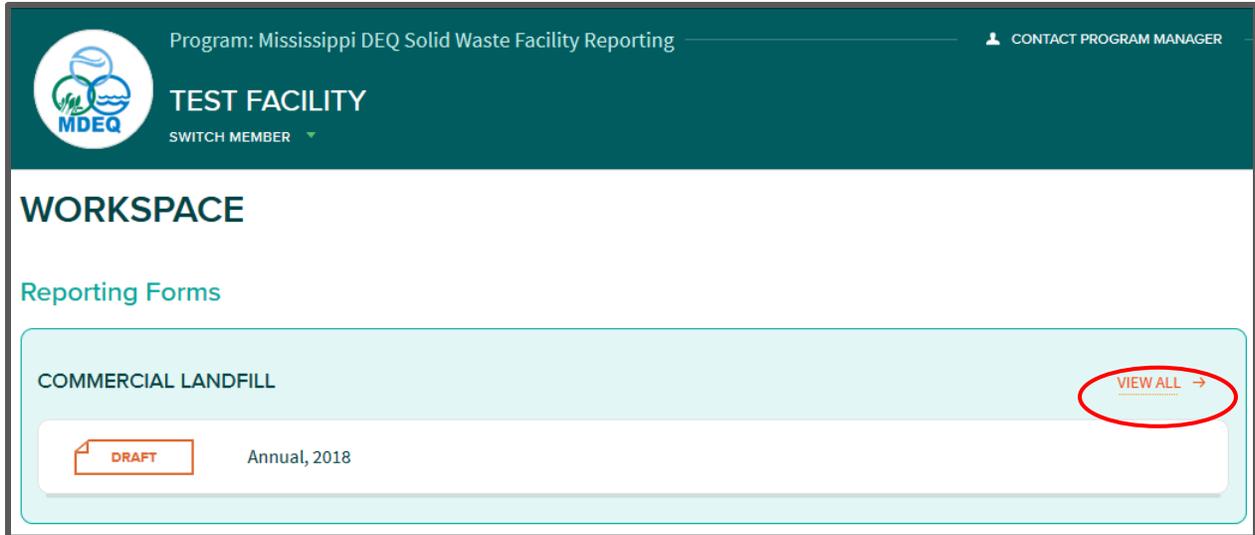
This time however, instead of selecting the dog-eared status box, select the "View All" link on the right-hand side of the page (circled in red in Figure 31).

This will take you to a page which will show all the reports that have been submitted through the system for this facility. Additionally, this view will show editing information such as when the report was created and when it was last updated as well as allow the user to filter through the reports to only export specific ones

Figure 32: Reporting Forms View

In order to export the responses into an .xlsx file, all the user has to do is use the export drop-down above the reports (circled in red in Figure 32).

Each question within the .xlsx file will be a designated column and each row is an individual report for the facility selected. The benefits of this option will be that data across many years will be easily retrievable and accessible as we use this system into the future.

HISTORICAL REPORTS

As mentioned in the previous section, historical reports will be stored within the platform within the Reporting Forms View. Please refer to the previous section to learn how to navigate to this view.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we would like to thank you for your participation in the Mississippi DEQ Solid Waste Facility Reporting Program. We have long looked forward to moving our process online and now with the help of Emerge Knowledge we have moved a step closer to doing just so.

As with any new program, there will be bugs and fixes along the way so we appreciate your patience in working with us to have these corrected. If you have any questions about any of the features of this new platform please reach out to the following members of the Waste Division.

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