



NBP Program Recognition Level Options

Since 1997 the NBP Program has based its' certification around a rigorous third-party audit requirement and internal auditing requirements. Recently, agencies have commented that they would appreciate an alternative to this Platinum standard that might involve less frequent third party auditing among other considerations. The NBP has also had an interest in formally recognizing those organizations that have committed to the NBP Code of Good Practice, have been trained but have not had the financial capability to meet the Platinum standard.

As a result, in consultation with our existing Platinum certified agencies and others, the NBP has created a tiered program of recognition for organizations that choose to participate in the Biosolids Management Program. The tiers reflect an organization's efforts to commit to the BMP, develop and implement the BMP, and have the BMP audited by internal and external audit teams. Audits of the BMP help ensure that it meets the requirements of the BMP, produces desired outcomes, and is continually improved and maintained over time.

The requirements for each tier of NBP recognition are as follows.

Tier 1: Bronze-Level Recognition

Organization has made a commitment to the NBP *Code of Good Practice*, with the acknowledged goal of implementing the 17 NBP *Biosolids Management Program Elements* and obtaining independent verification of the organization's BMP.

Tier 2: Silver-Level Recognition

Organization has implemented the 17 *BMP Elements* and has completed an NBP approved audit, recognizing the BMP as ready for a third party verification audit. To maintain silver-level recognition, organizations must annually conduct internal audits and submit the internal audit reports to NBP.

Tier 3: Gold-Level Recognition

Organization has completed an independent, third party BMP verification audit and has committed to conducting annual internal audits. To maintain gold-level recognition, the organization must submit annual internal audit reports to NBP and complete another third party BMP verification audit after five years. Organizations that have obtained gold-level recognition have the option of

committing to regular, third party interim audits and achieving platinum-level certification.

Tier 4: Platinum-Level Certification

Organization has completed third party BMP verification audit and at least one third-party interim audit with a commitment to a regular schedule of third party interim audits and internal audits. To maintain platinum-level certification, the organization must complete interim audits (at least two third party interim audits between verification audits), must submit interim or internal audit reports to NBP annually, and complete another third party verification audit (or re-verification) after five years.

Organizations may choose to participate in the NBP program at any of these tiers. All biosolids organizations are encouraged to start with a commitment to the NBP *Code of Good Practice*, learn about a BMP, and implement and seek audits as fits their organization.

While organizations may ultimately choose to not pursue NBP Gold-level Recognition or Platinum-level Certification, both of which require at least 1 independent third-party audit, the NBP program materials are designed to prepare an organization's BMP for audit-readiness. Those organizations can also proceed at their own pace to upgrade through the tiers through the Platinum level.

Existing Platinum certified agencies might also want to consider reducing their third party audit commitment and revert to a lower level of recognition. This can be done in consultation with the NBP staff.

(See Chapter 5 of this Guidance for additional information on the interim and re-verification audits, as well as maintenance of program recognition and certification.)

NBP provides recognition in the form of a "seal of approval" for organizations that receive program recognition. NBP recognition does not serve as a seal of product quality assurance, as direct product quality testing is not part of the BMP audit. Those organizations who receive program recognition are granted permission to use the NBP BMP seal on buildings, equipment, signs, or other items as deemed appropriate (except for biosolids materials). *(See Chapter 5 of this Auditor Guidance for details about the NBP "visual indicator" and accompanying designation statements)*