United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (2201A)
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U. S. EPA Small Business Resources

If you own a small business, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers a variety of compliance assistance and tools to assist you in complying with federal and state environmental laws. These resources can help you understand your environmental obligations, improve compliance and find cost-effective ways to comply through the use of pollution prevention and other innovative technologies.

Hotlines, Helplines and Clearinghouses

EPA sponsors approximately 89 free hotlines and clearinghouses that provide convenient assistance regarding environmental requirements.

The National Environmental Compliance Assistance Clearinghouse provides quick access to compliance assistance tools, contacts, and planned activities from the U.S. EPA, states, and other compliance assistance providers: http://www.epa.gov/clearinghouse

Pollution Prevention Clearinghouse
http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/library/ppicindex.htm

EPA's Small Business Ombudsman Hotline can provide a list of all the hot lines and assist in determining the hotline best meeting your needs:
(800) 368-5888

Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act
(800) 424-9346

National Response Center (to report oil and hazardous substance spills)
(800) 424-8802

Toxics Substances and Asbestos Information
(202) 554-1404

Safe Drinking Water
(800) 426-4791

Stratospheric Ozone and Refrigerants Information
(800) 296-1996

Clean Air Technology Center
(919) 541-0800

Wetlands Helpline
(800) 832-7828

EPA Websites

EPA has several Internet sites that provide useful compliance assistance information and materials for small businesses. If you don't have access to the Internet at your business, many public libraries provide access to the Internet at minimal or no cost.

EPA's Home Page
http://www.epa.gov

Small Business Assistance Program
http://www.epa.gov/ttn/sbap

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
http://www.epa.gov/compliance

Compliance Assistance Home Page
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/assistance

Office of Regulatory Enforcement
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/civil/index.html

Office of Site Remediation Enforcement
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/cleanup

Innovative Programs for Environmental Performance
http://www.epa.gov/partners

Small Business Ombudsman
www.sba.gov/ombudsman

Recycled/Recyclable
Printed with Soy/Canola ink on paper that contains at least 30% post consumer fiber

Compliance Assistance Centers

In partnership with industry, universities, and other federal and state agencies, EPA has established national Compliance Assistance Centers that provide Internet and "faxback" assistance services for several industries with many small businesses. The following Compliance Assistance Centers can be accessed through the Center's gateway at http://www.assistancecenters.net or by calling the phone numbers below and at their respective websites:

Metal Finishing
(1-800-AT-NMFRC or www.nmfrc.org)

Printing
(1-888-USPNEAC or www.pneac.org)

Automotive Service and Repair
(1-888-GRN-LINK or www.ccar-greenlink.org)

Agriculture
(1-888-663-2155 or www.epa.gov/agriculture)

Printed Wiring Board Manufacturing
(1-734-995-4911 or www.pwbrc.org)

The Chemical Industry
(1-800-672-6048 or www.chemalliance.org)

The Transportation Industry
(1-888-459-0656 or www.transource.org)

The Paints and Coatings Center
(1-800-286-6372 or www.paintcenter.org)

Three new centers are under development for the auto salvage sector, the construction industry, and U.S. Mexican border waste issues.

State Agencies

Many state agencies have established compliance assistance programs that provide on-site and other types of assistance. Contact your local state environmental agency for more information. For assistance in reaching state agencies, call EPA's Small Business Ombudsman at (800)-368-5888 or visit the Small Business Environmental Homepage at http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org/state.html.

Compliance Incentives

EPA provides incentives for environmental compliance. By participating in compliance assistance programs or voluntarily disclosing and promptly correcting violations, businesses may be eligible for penalty waivers or reductions. EPA has two policies that potentially apply to small businesses: The Audit Policy (http://www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/auditing) and the Small Business Policy (http://www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/smallbusiness). These do not apply if an enforcement action has already been initiated.

Commenting on Federal Enforcement Actions and Compliance Activities

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) established an ombudsman ("SBREFA Ombudsman") and 10 Regional Fairness Boards to receive comments from small businesses about federal agency enforcement actions. The SBREFA Ombudsman will annually rate each agency's responsiveness to small businesses. If you believe that you fall within the Small Business Administration's definition of a small business (based on your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) designation, number of employees or annual receipts, defined at 13 C.F.R. 121.201; in most cases, this means a business with 500 or fewer employees), and wish to comment on federal enforcement and compliance activities, call the SBREFA Ombudsman's toll-free number at 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247).

Every small business that is the subject of an enforcement or compliance action is entitled to comment on the Agency's actions without fear of retaliation. EPA employees are prohibited from using enforcement or any other means of retaliation against any member of the regulated community because the regulated community previously commented on its activities.

Your Duty to Comply

If you receive compliance assistance or submit comments to the SBREFA Ombudsman or Regional Fairness Boards, you still have the duty to comply with the law, including providing timely responses to EPA information requests, administrative or civil complaints, other enforcement actions or communications. The assistance information and comment processes do not give you any new rights or defenses in any enforcement action. These processes also do not affect EPA's obligation to protect public health or the environment under any of the environmental statutes it enforces, including the right to take emergency remedial or emergency response actions when appropriate. Those decisions will be based on the facts in each situation. The SBREFA Ombudsman and Fairness Boards do not participate in resolving EPA's enforcement actions. Also, remember that to preserve your rights, you need to comply with all rules governing the enforcement process.

EPA is disseminating this information to you without making a determination that your business or organization is a small business as defined by Section 222 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) or related provisions.