



Alberta Environment

Compliance Assurance Program Summary

❖ **Alberta's environmental legislation** sets out clear rules for the protection, enhancement and wise use of our environment. Through education and prevention programs, and strict enforcement measures, Alberta Environment ensures all Albertans understand and follow the province's environmental laws and continue to enjoy the clean and healthy environment that is important to our province's natural beauty.

Education

Caring for the environment is a shared responsibility. Alberta Environment works with Albertans, municipalities and industry to ensure they understand the role they play in protecting our environment.

Educational initiatives focus on the regulated community, which holds approvals, licences and registrations under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act or the Water Act, and individuals or companies whose activities might not require authorization from Alberta Environment, but could still impact the environment.

Educational programs promote compliance by raising awareness of the law and its purposes, how to comply with the law and the consequences of non-compliance.

Prevention

Alberta Environment regulates a wide range of industrial facilities in the province under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and the Water Act. This is most commonly done through conditions set out in environmental approvals or codes of practice. Alberta Environment's Compliance Inspection Program ensures facilities meet these conditions.

Under the Compliance Inspection Program, Alberta Environment conducts proactive, unannounced inspections and audits of regulated facilities. Department inspectors can review and inspect all aspects of facility's approval or registration during a single visit. The inspection may include taking samples of soil, groundwater and effluent and air emissions at their source.

Alberta Environment works with approval and registration holders to identify and correct areas of non-compliance. Significant non-compliance may be subject to enforcement action.

Enforcement

Those who do not comply with Alberta's environmental laws and regulations are held responsible for the effects of their actions on the environment. Every suspected violation that comes to the attention of Alberta Environment is assessed and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

Where non-compliance is identified, either through mandatory reporting or through other information such as an inspection or a call from the public, all of the circumstances are evaluated.

If a company or individual did not take reasonable measures to prevent the contravention, or knowingly and deliberately broke the law, enforcement action may result.

❖ Enforcement Tools

Alberta Environment has a variety of tools to ensure compliance.

❖ Written Warnings

Written Warnings are issued for minor contraventions or when there is the potential for an adverse environmental effect. Warnings, normally given to first-time offenders, are designed to encourage voluntarily compliance. Repeat non-compliance may lead to a more significant enforcement response.

❖ Administrative Penalties

Administrative Penalties are monetary fines designed to deal with minor administrative offenses, such as failure to file reports required under an approval or code of practice. An adverse environmental effect does not have to occur in order for an Administrative Penalty to be issued.

❖ Orders

Orders are issued when immediate action is required to prevent or stop an adverse environmental effect. Alberta Environment issues three types of orders:

- **Environmental Protection Order** – issued to prevent or stop contraventions to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and ensure action is taken to fix environmental problems
- **Water Management Order** – issued to prevent or stop contraventions under the Water Act and ensure action is taken to fix environmental problems
- **Enforcement Order** – issued to compel a regulated party to remedy a contravention and, where appropriate, require actions to prevent future contraventions



... ❖ **We all have a role to play in ensuring our environment and natural resources are protected.**

If you have information about a spill, release or other environmental emergency, call 1-800-222-6514, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

... ❖ **Prosecutions**

All legislation enforced by Alberta Environment includes the option of prosecution. Penalties depend on the severity of the contraventions and may include fines or jail time for serious offenses.

... ❖ **Creative Sentencing**

Creative sentences are used to make prosecution penalties more meaningful and result in clear benefits for the environment. Coupled with a standard fine, creative sentences are imposed in situations where a monetary penalty may be inappropriate because of limited financial resources.

... ❖ **Appeals**

Alberta's environmental legislation allows for companies or individuals to appeal an Order or an Administrative Penalty to the Environmental Appeals Board. All prosecutions may also be appealed in court.

Reporting spills, releases and environmental emergencies

Any spill, release or emergency that may cause, is causing or has caused an adverse effect to the environment must be reported immediately to Alberta Environment.

Immediate reporting allows Alberta Environment, industry and local response teams to respond quickly and prevent further damage to the environment through timely containment and effective clean up.

Failure to report will result in stringent enforcement action.

Compliance Sweeps

In addition to routine unannounced inspections, Alberta Environment conducts annual education and inspection programs, or sweeps, which focus on a geographic area or specific industry. These focused programs give Alberta Environment an opportunity to work together with businesses and ensure they understand the environmental rules that apply to them.

These programs have two parts:

- Specific, detailed information about regulations and requirements are sent to targeted businesses
- Unannounced inspections are done to ensure businesses are following the requirements

This effort produces several important results:

- All businesses within a specific sector or geographic area receive the same information from Alberta Environment about environmental responsibility
- Non-compliance can be identified and corrected cooperatively, if this is an appropriate option
- Overt acts of non-compliance can be addressed using a variety of enforcement tools

Contact Us

To report a spill or environmental emergency call 1-800-222-6514

For more information about Alberta Environment's Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Programs, call the regional office nearest you.

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To contact your local Alberta Environment office, call the regional office nearest you or dial 310-0000.



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