

## **The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act 1999* (CEPA 1999) and Pollution Prevention**

"An Act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development"

### **What is pollution prevention?**

Pollution prevention is "the use of processes, practices, materials, products, substances or energy that avoid or minimize the creation of pollutants and waste and reduce the overall risk to the environment or human health."

### **How do we practice pollution prevention?**

Other methods of environmental protection focus on managing waste and pollution after they have been created. Pollution prevention avoids creating that waste and pollution in the first place.

Effective pollution prevention requires a different approach to the design and operation of our mines, farms, manufacturing plants, refineries, transportation systems, parks, and any other facility that can potentially create waste and pollution. The implementing of pollution prevention may vary from sector to sector, but generally, techniques and practices will focus on areas such as:

- substances of concern
- efficient use and conservation of natural resources
- material and feedstock substitution
- product design/product reformulation
- process changes
- reuse and recycling on-site
- training
- purchasing techniques
- equipment modifications
- operating efficiencies/clean production.

The Government of Canada's environmental protection strategies are driven by a vision of environmentally sustainable economic development. This vision depends on a clean, healthy environment, and a strong, healthy economy. By preventing the creation of pollutants and waste, we help protect the environment from harm. By increasing the efficiency of production, avoiding accidental and operational releases, and reducing the nonproductive costs of treatment and disposal, we make our economy more efficient and competitive.

### **What does CEPA 1999 do to encourage pollution prevention?**

The Act is designed to protect the environment and human health through pollution prevention. The Government of Canada has a duty to administer CEPA 1999 in a manner that promotes and reinforces enforceable pollution prevention approaches.

CEPA 1999 has several provisions that assist in meeting these goals. The management and control of toxic substances is a key responsibility of the federal government. Under the Act, people releasing toxic substances to the environment can be required to prepare and implement plans to minimize or eliminate the environmental and human health risks posed by these substances.

The Government of Canada can also require preparation and implementation of plans from facilities that export wastes for final disposal to ensure these exports are reduced.

If Canadian air or water pollution affects another country, CEPA 1999 can be used to require that pollution prevention plans or regulations be developed and implemented. The Act can also be used to require preparation and implementation of such plans by federal facilities.

### **What about new substances?**

CEPA 1999 contains provisions to prevent substances newly introduced to Canada from causing future pollution problems. Anyone interested in manufacturing or importing a substance that is not on the Domestic Substances List will be required to provide specific information for risk assessment purposes. CEPA 1999 enables the government to impose controls on new substances that could harm human health or the environment.

---

### **Further information:**

#### **Internet:**

Additional information on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 is available on Environment Canada's Green Lane on the Internet at: [www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARRegistry](http://www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARRegistry)

#### **Inquiry Centre:**

351 St. Joseph Boulevard  
Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3  
Telephone: (819) 997-2800  
toll-free 1 800 668-6767  
Fax: (819) 953-2225  
E-mail: [enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca](mailto:enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca)

April 2005