

The Ministry of the Environment and Your Business:

How your small or medium sized businesses can become environmentally responsible community members

The Ministry of the Environment wants to be sure that small and medium size business owners understand Ontario's environmental regulations and assess whether your business is operating within them. These regulations direct businesses to perform a variety of functions, such as obtaining environmental permits (Certificates of Approval), reporting spills, registering hazardous wastes and co-operating with Environmental Officers performing inspections. Knowing the environmental requirements and regularly reviewing your operation to confirm that you are complying with them will make your company a responsible player in protecting our air, land and water resources.

Is my business subject to specific environmental requirements?

For many small and medium sized businesses operating in Ontario, following the requirements found in environmental regulations is simply part of doing business. Sometimes, businesses are not aware that they are subject to specific environmental requirements when dealing with things like their emissions or waste disposal. The following is a short list of businesses that may require air permits, generate hazardous wastes or have other environmental requirements that make them subject to environmental regulations:

- Asphalt manufacturers
- Auto body shops
- Automobile repair shops
- Bakeries
- Car washes
- Dry cleaners/Laundromats
- Equipment repair firms
- Funeral services
- Foundries
- Furniture manufacturing & repair
- Gas stations
- Grounds-keeping companies
- Laboratories
- Leather manufacturers
- Manufacturing facilities
- Metal finishers/platers
- Medical/Dental offices
- Pesticide vendors
- Print/photo shops
- Refrigeration/air conditioning services
- Sand and gravel operations
- Salvage yards
- Small engine repair shops
- Solvent metal cleaners
- Trucking companies
- Trailer Parks
- Well drillers
- Waste disposal or clean up companies
- Woodworking & refinishing firms

If your business falls under or involves any of these types of operations, read on to find out more.

What do I need to do to ensure my business is meeting its environmental obligations?

The following checklist can be used as a tool to help you regularly assess whether your business is meeting its environmental obligations.

TIP

Someone knowledgeable about the basic environmental requirements of your company should complete the checklist and should be in control of operations at all times

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES IN ONTARIO

Review each question carefully. Use the answers from the questions to help create a working list of environmental compliance issues that require further action.

Approvals, Permits and Licenses

- Do you have an industrial air emission point that may require a Certificate of Approval?
- Have approvals been obtained for all waste water discharges into drains, sanitary or storm sewers, streams or other water bodies?
- If you already have a Certificate of Approval, is it up to date, do you have a current copy and are you operating according to its requirements?
- Are there any plans that could increase discharges and if so has an application been made to amend your Certificate of Approval?
- Have you obtained the appropriate license for the use or sale of pesticides?

Operational Management

- Do you conduct regular maintenance on your pollution control equipment?
- Has adequate spill containment for hazardous materials/wastes been provided?
- Do you ensure that industrial wastewaters are not discharged into on-site septic systems without a Certificate of Approval?
- Are employees provided with necessary environmental training?
- Is waste properly stored?
- Is your hazardous and liquid industrial waste disposed of through an MOE licensed carrier?
- Do you ensure that waste is not stockpiled or thrown into an unapproved on-site disposal area?
- Is any analytical testing of environmental samples performed by a laboratory with the proper license and/or accreditation?
- If you serve drinking water to the public and you are not connected to the municipal system, do you follow all regulatory requirements?
- Are all spills or discharges that may impact the environment or human health reported immediately to the proper authorities?

Documentation

- Are transportation manifests completed for the disposal of hazardous or liquid wastes as required by Ontario Regulation 347?
- Are all hazardous and liquid wastes properly evaluated, labeled and registered with the MOE?
- Have 90-day hazardous waste storage reports been submitted when necessary?
- Are all records required by MOE accurate and up to date and are you keeping copies?
- Does the company have a written contingency plan to respond to environmental emergencies?

- ❑ Is the MOE Spills Action Centre number easily accessible, in the event of an environmental emergency?

If you answered any question with a “no” or if you are unsure of how to answer a specific question, this likely means that your company needs to take additional steps to achieve compliance.

TIP

Monitor your company’s operation, keep up-to-date records that demonstrate your compliance with environmental legislation and any related approvals, permits, licences, etc., and make sure that these records are easily accessible.

When complying with environmental regulations:

- Take the necessary measures to remedy any problem areas and document corrections made;
- Apply for those environmental documents necessary to run your business in Ontario;
- Ask questions and request explanations; and
- Read and understand all MOE documents you have received including Certificates of Approval.

You may find it helpful to seek assistance from experts in this area. Make sure that the help you choose is familiar with the regulations and permit requirements relevant to your business.

Where can I go for more information and/or assistance?

The Ministry of the Environment developed this fact sheet to assist small businesses in reviewing and improving compliance with environmental regulations. It does not include a comprehensive listing of all provincial environmental

regulations that are applicable to all small businesses, nor does it deal with municipal or federal requirements. Further research beyond this guide, by your business, may be necessary. The checklist is not a guarantee that a small business meets all applicable regulations. It is a tool to be used as a first step in evaluating compliance.

For further information on:

Environmental regulations and your business refer to the ‘Business and the Environment’ link on the Ministry of the Environment website at www.ene.gov.on.ca or call the Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923

Certificates of Approval, please contact the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch at 1-800-461-6290 or by email at EAABGen@ene.gov.on.ca.

Hazardous waste registration and transportation in Ontario refer to the Hazardous Waste Information Network website www.hwin.ca or 1-866-494-6663.

Drinking water related issues, please contact the Drinking Water Education and Outreach Branch at 416-314-1782 or the Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923.

You can also contact your local Ministry of the Environment Regional Office at:

Thunder Bay Regional Office
Toll free from area codes 705/807:
1-800-875-7772
Tel: (807) 475-1205

Central Region Office
Toll free: 1-800-810-8048
Tel: (416) 326-6700

Kingston Regional Office
Toll free for area codes 613/705/905:
1-800-267-0974
Tel: (613) 549-4000

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Hamilton Regional Office
Toll free: 1-800-668-4557
Tel: (905) 521-7640

London Regional Office
Toll free number from area code 519:
1-800-265-7672
Tel: (519) 873-5000

If you believe you have a spill or other
environmental emergency, call the Spills Action
Centre at 1-800-268-6060