

Assistance Offered for Help with Understanding and Complying with Environmental Regulations

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Understanding and complying with environmental regulations can be complex for anyone not involved in the field of environmental law. The regulations are usually long and intricate in nature. But, the need for environmental regulations has been made apparent throughout history.

In the 1920s, Love Canal in New York was originally built for industrial and energy aims but was quickly made into a municipal and industrial chemical dumpsite. The dump was covered with soil and soon houses and schools were built over the dump. The residents became ill and barrels buried in the soil began popping up during heavy rains. Eventually, the federal government bought out more than 800 families and moved them away from the site.

On Oct. 27, 1948, the people of Donora, Pennsylvania, woke up to a thick yellow blanket of smog. A cold layer of air had trapped a poisonous mixture of carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and metal dust from the town's zinc plant and steel mill. Twenty people died and at least half of the local citizens were sick.

In the 1970s, the dirt roads of the former town of Times Beach, Missouri, were sprayed with used oil and dioxin, a highly toxic chemical. Ultimately, the town had to be evacuated, and the federal government spent \$110 million to clean it up.

These events, along with others, demonstrated the need for establishment of a federal agency that would concentrate on protecting the environment, and thus in 1970 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created.

Since the EPA was established, many laws have been enacted to prevent, minimize, remedy and punish actions that threaten or damage human health and the environment. Without these laws, the health of humans and the environment is at risk. The overall quality of life for all species diminishes when there are no environmental regulations to govern the exposure of pollutants through the air, water and improper management of waste.

The Kentucky Division of Compliance Assistance recognizes the frustrations of trying to understand the environmental regulations. It is sometimes difficult for small businesses

to understand what is expected of them, which, in turn, can make it harder to ensure compliance with the regulations. DCA helps entities comply with environmental requirements, certifies environmental professionals and facilitates environmental stewardship. Four programs in DCA carry out these functions.

- The Environmental Compliance Assistance Program (ECAP) assists and educates regulated entities so they understand and comply with their environmental obligations. ECAP also offers free detailed assistance to small businesses in understanding regulatory requirements and helping them get into compliance.
- The Brownfield Redevelopment Program assists in redeveloping and revitalizing properties that are abandoned or underutilized due to real or perceived contamination. The Brownfield Redevelopment Program houses quality educational services and support for private and public entities wishing to clean up and reuse these properties.
- The Operator Certification Program (OCP) certifies drinking water, wastewater and solid waste operators in the Commonwealth. OCP helps to ensure that responsible, knowledgeable and experienced environmental professionals are protecting our natural resources.
- KY EXCEL is a voluntary environmental leadership program designed to promote and recognize environmental stewardship. KY EXCEL educates and encourages Kentucky citizens, businesses, and communities to make sustainable and informed choices for our environment.

DCA exists to provide services that increase environmental knowledge and enhance the quality of Kentucky's environment and communities.

Confused by regulations? Have questions? Call 800-926-8111, e-mail envhelp@ky.gov or visit the website at <http://dca.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx> for assistance. DCA is here to help you!