



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
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www.dec.ny.gov

Environmental Self Audit For Small Businesses



Disclaimer

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Purpose

This self audit is designed for small business owners who want to determine environmental compliance needs for their business. This audit will help identify activities subject to permitting or regulation, and provides contact information for assistance. Limited information on spill response is also included.

Examples of Small Businesses Subject to Environmental Regulation

Appliance repair shops	Asphalt manufacturers
Auto repair shops	Auto body shops
Bakeries	Breweries
Building cleaning services	Car washes
Chemical manufacturers	Construction firms
Doctors offices	Dry cleaners and laundromats
Educational facilities	Farms
Fuel-oil distributors	Foundries
Furniture manufacturers	Funeral services
Gasoline service stations	Graphic arts facilities
Health care facilities	House painters
Interior decorators	Leather manufacturers
Marinas	Metallurgical industries
Metal treatment facilities	Photo processors
Plastics manufacturers	Refrigeration manufacturers
Restaurants	Small-engine repair shops
Solvent using metal cleaners	Trucking companies
Veterinary facilities	Vineyards

How the Audit Works

This self audit is organized by regulatory program. The yes/no questions will identify whether an activity, piece of equipment, or waste is subject to regulation, possibly requiring a permit.

If your answers to any questions have a red asterisk (*) refer to the program area in the Environmental Compliance Guide for Small Businesses. The compliance guide is available at www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4811.html

Where to Go for More Information

For more information, go to the web addresses that appear in the headings of each series of questions. Phone numbers to call for assistance are provided on the website.

You can also contact the Small Business Environmental Ombudsman (SBEO) for assistance. The SBEO provides guidance on which environmental permits are needed, when to obtain them, and the rights and responsibilities of businesses once a permit or registration is issued. The SBEO also makes referrals for technical assistance and grant financing services at the local, state and federal levels. In addition, the SBEO investigates and resolves complaints between small businesses and state or local authorities. All SBEO services are free and confidential.

For more information about the SBEO, visit the Empire State Development website at www.empire.state.ny.us/environment and click on the "Small Business Environmental Ombudsman" link under "Permitting and Compliance Assistance;" e-mail environment@empire.state.ny.us, or call 1-877-247-2329.

Program Area: Air

Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/about/644.html

The release of any dust, fume, gas, mist, odor, smoke, vapor or combination to the outside is an air emission. Some facilities may require an air permit or registration to regulate their air emissions.

Does your facility generate neighborhood nuisances, such as dust from unpaved roads, conveyors or uncovered storage piles, or excessive noise from heavy equipment and trucks?

Yes * No

Does your facility use only dust collection equipment that discharges to the atmosphere?

Yes * No

Are motor vehicles, fueled by gasoline or diesel, used in the day to day operation of the business?

Yes * No

Does your facility use any coatings (e.g. paint) that do not comply with state and federal volatile organic compound content limitations?

Yes * No

Does your facility use cold solvent cleaners?

Yes * No

Program Area: Solid Waste Management

Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/292.html

For the most part, "solid waste" is trash, rubbish or garbage. Facilities generate many types of solid waste, such as used towels, empty containers and organic waste.

Other than composting, does your facility dispose of solid waste on your property?

Yes * No

Does your facility store solid waste near wetlands or drinking water?

Yes * No

Program Area: Hazardous Waste Management

Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/60838.html

“Hazardous waste” regulations for businesses depend upon the type of waste and the quantity generated. Hazardous waste may be: listed wastes in 6 NYCRR 371; characteristic wastes which are ignitable, corrosive, reactive or toxic; mixtures of solid waste and hazardous waste; or used oil containing more than 1000 ppm total halogens which is not burned for energy recovery.

Has your facility conducted a complete and accurate hazardous waste determination for each waste generated?

Yes No *

Has your facility determined your hazardous waste generator status?

Yes No *

Program Area: Water

Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8467.html

Wastewater is generated any time water is discharged. Operators of facilities must know what types of wastewater discharges they have, where these discharges go, and what requirements are applicable to them. Discharges from a business facility to a municipal sewage treatment plant may require an industrial user permit.

Does your facility have floor drains that do not connect to a public sanitary sewer?

Yes * No

Does your facility have a process wastewater discharge permit, pretreatment permit, or other proper documentation allowing discharges to the local sewer?

Yes No *

Does your facility have a septic system?

Yes * No

Other than an oil/water separator, does your facility provide any wastewater treatment prior to discharging to the sanitary sewer?

Yes No *

Does your facility generate any wastewater other than sanitary water (kitchen, breakroom or washroom), such as process wastewater?

Yes * No

Program Area: Petroleum Spills
Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8692.html

Petroleum spills that occur within New York State (NYS) must be reported to the 24 hour NYS Spill Hotline at 1-800-457-7362 within two hours of discovery, unless they meet *all* of the following criteria:

- The quantity of the spill is known to be less than five gallons;
- The spill is contained and under the control of the spiller;
- The spill has not and will not reach the state's water or any land, and
- The spill is cleaned up within two hours of discovery.

A spill is considered contained if it occurs on an impervious surface such as asphalt or concrete.

Federal and local agencies may also need to be notified, including the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802, and your local fire and emergency response corps.

The information above the dashed line can be detached and posted for your convenience.

Have you minimized the risk of reportable spills to the extent practical by storing petroleum products in impervious, bermed areas?

Yes No *

If your facility has had a petroleum spill exceeding five gallons, have clean up or remediation efforts been completed?

Yes No *

Program Area: Chemical Spills
Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8428.html

Each chemical on the state's List of Hazardous Substances (6 NYCRR Part 597 located at www.dec.ny.gov/regs/4449.html) has a corresponding "reportable quantity." You must report each release, spill or overfill that equals or exceeds the reportable quantity of a regulated chemical to NYSDEC. To report these events, call the 24 hour NYS Spill Hotline at 1-800-457-7362 within two hours of the release, spill or overfill.

In addition, you must, within two hours, report releases of any amount (i.e. even if it is less than the reportable quantity) of a listed chemical which may enter the environment and result in the following:

- a fire with off-site impacts;
- an explosion;
- a violation of air-quality standards;
- vapors, dust or gases that may cause illness or injury to people outside the facility,
- or runoff from fire control or dilution waters that may cause or contribute to a violation of water-quality standards.

In the event of a release (i.e., a spill on soil, or that enters a water body or storm drain), the business owner or operator must take immediate action to protect human health, safety and the environment by responding appropriately to the spill, investigating its cause, and taking any necessary corrective action to prevent future releases.

You do not have to notify NYSDEC within two hours if:

- a spill or overfill is captured in an appropriate secondary containment system;
- any hazardous substances are contained; and
- you expect to recover or account for the total volume of the spill within 24 hours.

Suspected or probable releases to the environment must be reported to the NYSDEC Spill Response Hotline, 1-800-457-7362, within 24 hours of discovery.

The information above the dashed line can be detached and posted for your convenience.

Are you aware of the reportable quantity of each chemical stored at your facility?

Yes No *

If your facility has had an environmental release, have clean up and remediation efforts been completed?

Yes No *

Program Area: Chemical and Petroleum Bulk Storage
Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/287.html

NYSDEC has established standards for both aboveground and underground petroleum bulk storage and hazardous substances storage chemical bulk storage. Regulated tanks must be operated and maintained in accordance with the technical standards of the regulations. Registration forms for both petroleum and chemical (hazardous substance) tanks can be obtained from the NYSDEC website above.

Does your facility have either (1) underground and/or aboveground petroleum storage tanks with a combined capacity of more than 1,100 gallons or (2) an underground petroleum tank that holds more than 110 gallons and is storing something other than heating oil?

Yes * No

Does your underground tank or stationary aboveground tank store more than 185 gallons of a hazardous substance?

Yes * No

Does your non-stationary tank store 2,200 pounds or more of a hazardous substance, or a mixture thereof, for a period of ninety days or more?

Yes * No

Program Area: Used Oil

Web Site: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8786.html

All used oil tanks, regardless of size, are subject to the petroleum bulk storage registration requirements. Registration fees are required only if the used oil is burned on site for heating and the combined storage capacity of all the petroleum fuel tanks at the facility exceeds 1,100 gallons. Drums do not have to be registered.

Is used oil stored in sturdy, leak proof drums or tanks that are in compliance with State or local building and fire codes?

Yes No *

Are drums or tanks clearly labeled "USED OIL"?

Yes No *

Do the labels for all aboveground tanks include both the design capacity and the working capacity?

Yes No *

Are all underground tanks labeled at the fill ports?

Yes No *

Does your facility avoid mixing used oil and hazardous waste, unless the hazardous waste is ignitable, such as parts cleaning solvent (petroleum naphtha)?

Yes No *

Are you burning used oil from off-site facilities?

Yes * No