

# Your environment protection licence and what it means to you

An environment protection licence is a legally enforceable document for you and your business operation. Issued by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), it lists the activities you can undertake and the conditions for operating your business as they relate to the environment. It will help you protect the environment and prevent pollution incidents.

## Read and understand your licence

First you will receive a draft licence for your comment and review, which you need to read carefully. If you don't understand any part of it, ask your EPA officer to explain. The finalised licence determines the conditions under which your business may operate.

### About the EPA

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) manages environmental issues, responds to pollution incidents, and enforces environmental regulations such as the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO Act). We also issue environment protection licences.

## Understand the legal obligations common to all licences

All licencees must comply with environmental requirements under the POEO Act. These include:

- pollution of waters: it is an offence under section 120 of the POEO Act to pollute waters
- offensive odour: a licensee must not cause or permit the emission of any offensive odour from the premises under section 129 of the POEO Act
- the requirement to prepare a pollution incident response management plan under section 153a, and
- the requirement to publish or make available monitoring data from your licensed site.

## Inform the EPA if something changes on your site

Inform us if your operations change in ways that relate to your licensed activities. These changes may require you to apply to the EPA to have your licence varied.

## Comply with its conditions

Your licence contains conditions organised in sections. If you don't comply with these conditions, you may be committing an offence. Key conditions include:

- the land parcel where you can undertake your activity
- the location of any monitoring or discharge points
- limits, including:
  - the activity you are permitted to undertake, as per schedule 1 of the POEO Act
  - the type and volume of waste you can receive and store at the site
  - the types and concentrations of pollutants you may be able to discharge
  - the hours of operation
  - noise limits
- monitoring: what you must sample, where, and how often
- conditions you must operate within, such as:
  - maintaining plant and equipment
  - environmental controls, for example, those to prevent dust and stormwater pollution
- a requirement that you notify the EPA immediately if a pollution incident or environmental harm occurs
- regular reporting to the EPA under your Annual Return
- your financial assurance/bank guarantee: most waste facilities are required to hold a financial assurance.

## Understand that the EPA has powers and requirements

The POEO Act empowers EPA authorised officers to perform functions that ensure the environment is protected. Our officers may come onto your premises, undertake inspections and require reports or information. The EPA can also vary any condition of your licence in consultation with you.

All environment protection licences are public documents. The EPA is required make them available on our POEO Public Register at [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/prpoeo/index.htm](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/prpoeo/index.htm).

This public register also includes a range of information about your licence, including legal notices, audits, fines and annual returns.

## More information

Find out more about environment protection licences at: [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/licensing/licencePOEO.htm](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/licensing/licencePOEO.htm)

Or contact the Environment Line:

**Phone:** 131 555 or **email:** [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.epa.nsw.gov.au/wastechanges](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/wastechanges)

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**Report pollution and environmental incidents:** Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only)