

Accredited licences

Updated June 2011

EPA 485/11: This guideline will help licensees prepare an application to obtain an accredited licence.

Introduction

An accredited licence encourages and rewards holders of EPA licences for following best practice environmental management standards. Accredited licence-holders are rewarded with discounted licence fees and less prescriptive licence conditions.

Eligibility for an accredited licence

The most important requirement for gaining an accredited licence is that you can demonstrate a high level of environmental performance, and you must be able to maintain this performance.

To be considered for an accredited licence, you must:

- already hold an EPA licence
- demonstrate full compliance for a period of three years with the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (the Act), including compliance with licence conditions, Environment Protection Policies and the general environmental duty (Section 25)
- have an excellent environmental record
- have in place an environment management system certified to ISO14001 standard
- have in place a continuous improvement program that maintains the licensee's status as beyond compliant
- demonstrate a commitment to excellence in environmental performance.

Benefits and outcomes

Licence holders who gain and retain an accredited licence will benefit from:

- a 50% reduction in environment management fee
- enhanced credibility with customers and the community due to EPA recognition of excellent environmental performance. The EPA will issue a media release in recognition of an accredited licence being granted
- a licence term of at least 10 years, with an assurance that there will be no change to licence conditions during this period (other than those that address changes to national or environmental standards) assuming that environmental performance is maintained and the licence is not revoked
- more flexible, less prescriptive licence conditions that focus on better environmental outcomes.

How to apply for an accredited licence

Consult the EPA

Before applying for an accredited licence, you should speak to the EPA about your proposal. We emphasise the advantages and importance of having early discussions.

Application format

The application for an accredited licence must be made on the appropriate application form. This can be accessed from the [EPA website](#).

Information to be supplied

Comprehensive information on the following items should be included as attachments to your application form.

1 Environment management system

Details of your environment management system or EMS (certified to ISO14001 standard) that relate to the activities for which you are seeking an accredited licence, must be provided. The documentation must include the following which is standard for an EMS:

- a copy of the ISO14001 certificate and the certification body's most recent report
- facility environmental policy
- facility EMS scope and objectives
- facility aspects and impacts register
- risk assessment tool and identified significant risks
- objectives and targets for managing significant risks
- a summary of operational controls for key significant risks
- a legal register
- a monitoring and measurement program
- an external communication system plan
- an emergency and contingency plan
- a management review of the EMS procedure and an example of the most recent management review
- an internal audit program and an example of the results from the most recent audit program

As stated above, this information will have been developed already as part of the development and certification of your EMS.

2 Continuous improvement program

Details of your continuous improvement program must be submitted as part of your application. This program must aim to maintain your status as beyond compliance. The program should consider areas such as cleaner production, waste minimisation, efficiency gains, greenhouse gas measurement and reduction strategies, and community consultation. The program should also show links with the EMS in a number of areas including capturing objectives and targets, management review and audit programs. The documentation provided to meet these criteria must include the following:

- the continuous improvement program plan, including detail of measurable targets and timeframes
- a plan for undertaking continuous improvement program audits
- an example of the results from the most recent continuous improvement audit program (if available)

- a community action plan.

3 Environmental performance

Evidence of your excellent environmental performance must be submitted as part of the application. The following documentation may be used to demonstrate this:

- a declaration of your environmental performance at the licensed premises during the last three years. In particular, you should outline any breaches of licence conditions that you know of, and any actions by the EPA such as warnings (formal and informal), environment protection orders or prosecutions.
- evidence of legal compliance with all relevant legislation, eg acts, regulations, EPPs, licences
- complaints and communication management plan for external stakeholders
- monitoring and measurement plans/register and evidence that the results of monitoring and measurement have been assessed
- evidence that demonstrates a downward trend of the incidence of equipment failure.

Fee

No fee will be charged for an application for an accredited licence. However, if you are already an accredited licensee and make an application when starting a new licensed activity, the standard application fees will apply for that activity.

Granting an accredited licence

If the EPA is satisfied that you have met all of the requirements, you will be granted an accredited licence. You will be advised in writing and issued a performance-based licence. Within 14 days of issuing an accredited licence, a notice will be published in the *Government Gazette* giving your name and the location of the licensed operation.

Ongoing requirements

Continued compliance with your accredited licence will be assessed against the following:

- external accreditation of your environment management system by a qualified environmental auditor, or a certification body accredited by the Joint Accreditation Scheme—Australia/New Zealand
- annual public reports of environmental performance (applicable to the licensed site) signed by a representative of the licensee
- progress with a continuous improvement program that specifies measurable targets and deadlines for improved environmental performance. The program must ensure that the licensee remains beyond compliance—that is, achieves more than legislative requirements—and should involve the local community.

If a licensee fails to maintain the requirements of the system, the accredited licence may be revoked and replaced with a standard EPA licence.

Annual performance report

You must submit a performance report to the EPA within 60 days of the licence anniversary, unless the EPA gives you approval to submit at another time. The performance report must:

- show evidence that you continue to meet all of the requirements of an accredited licence. This can be demonstrated by submission of:
 - current surveillance reports detailing your EMS audit findings conducted by an external body
 - a summary of any changes or additions to your EMS

- a summary of the evaluation of your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or performance against set objectives and targets
 - analysis of monitoring and measurement data collected during the year
 - a summary of the strategies undertaken through the continuous improvement program
 - a summary of capital spent on improvements that resulted in better environmental outcomes
 - a summary of any stakeholder/community engagement
 - a summary of any customer complaints and follow-up action taken
 - a summary of any environmental issues, incidents or breaches that occurred during the year and any follow-up action taken.
- be authorised and signed by a person authorised by the licence-holder (normally a senior officer at the accredited site).

Penalties

Penalties exist for providing false or misleading information in a performance report. The EPA may take action that could include revoking an accredited licence if you do not meet requirements.

Review

An accredited licence is for a period of 10 years. Application for re-accreditation should be made at least six months before the expiry date of your licence. If there is reason to believe the conditions of an accredited licence are not being adhered to, the EPA may review your performance at any time.

If you breach licence conditions or relevant EPPs, or there have been other offences under the Act, the EPA may take action that could include the revoking of an accredited licence.

An accredited licence that has been suspended or revoked will revert to a standard EPA licence and standard fees will be payable. In addition, more prescriptive licence conditions will be imposed. If an accredited licence is revoked during a licensing year, you will be required to pay the difference in fees between a standard licence and an accredited licence for the remainder of that year.

Disclaimer

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

Further information

Legislation

Legislation may be viewed on the Internet at: <www.legislation.sa.gov.au>

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Service SA Government Legislation Outlet
Adelaide Service SA Centre
108 North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: 13 23 24
Facsimile: (08) 8204 1909
Website: <shop.service.sa.gov.au>

For general information please contact:

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