

EPA Compliance Plan 2020–21

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is South Australia's independent environment protection regulator. We work to protect, restore and improve the environment through the risk-based regulation of pollution, waste, noise and radiation. Our core regulatory work positions us alongside businesses that have been authorised through the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982*, with intervention activities also extending to non-licensed businesses, households and the broader community.

By working closely with industry, the community and government, the EPA protects our unique natural environment while supporting economic growth and improving the wellbeing of South Australians.

We hold people and businesses to account, correct poor behaviours and encourage good behaviour through licensing, monitoring, regulation, education and enforcement. Our compliance response is risk based, proportionate to the actual or potential impact on the environment, and considers the attitude and compliance history of the alleged offender.

This plan outlines the EPA's targeted interventions for the coming year. These are derived from a range of data sources and activities, including data from site inspections, monitoring, complaints and incidents, legislative reviews, and industry and community feedback.

The EPA Regulatory Framework includes:

- 2,400 authorisations under the *Environment Protection Act 1993*
- 12,000 licences and registrations under the *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982*
- 720 actively managed contaminated sites.

EPA responds to approximately:

- 1,000 incident reports and complaints, and 480 emergency incidents per year
- 130 site contamination notifications per year.

To minimise potential impacts to people and the environment from industrial practice, the EPA will...

- Use a team based approach to effectively oversee compliance and enforcement activities for complex and higher risk licences.
- Ensure that detailed compliance assessments of all designated high and medium risk licences are undertaken during FY 2020–21.
- Undertake compliance campaigns for lower risk licensees including those undertaking abrasive blasting operations, hot mix asphalt preparation, chemical works, chemicals storage, discharge to marine waters, treatment of listed waste, breweries and helicopter landing facilities.
- Apply the EPA's compliance principles to determine an appropriate response when facilities operating without the required EPA licence are identified.
- Target reckless or intentional criminal activity with investigations, prosecutions, fines and orders to restore the environment and pursue economic benefit.
- Take appropriate compliance actions in response to pollution incidents to prevent recurrence.

Outcomes

- Major sources of pollution and waste are monitored and controlled
- Improved compliance
- Environmental requirements are understood by industry

To promote recycling and the circulation of materials, the EPA will...

- Engage with industry to improve recovery rates of beverage containers and reduce the amount of single-use plastics and plastic shopping bags.
- Impose stockpile management licence conditions that will control the quantity of recyclable wastes permitted for temporary storage.
- Impose financial assurance requirements as a condition of licence if there is perceived risk of unauthorised stockpiling or abandonment of recyclable wastes.
- Use intelligence to inform targeted waste compliance and enforcement programs.

Outcomes

- Good environmental systems and practices are adopted
- Improved practices and behaviour by industry and communities

To ensure communities are informed and engaged (where appropriate) in compliance activity, the EPA will...

- Encourage regulated facilities to develop meaningful relationships with their local communities and other stakeholders, and to share information publicly
- Provide access to regulatory instruments and documents via the EPA's public register, with information on significant matters published on the EPA website
- Treat statutory public notification requirements as the minimum, expanding consultation where a matter is of wider interest

Outcome

- Communities are listened to and involved in decisions that affect them

To safeguard the community and minimise environmental nuisance, the EPA will...

- Provide 24 hour/7 days a week incident advice and response to support emergency services, industry and community.
- Provide a point of community contact for complaints about non-licensed activities regulated by the *Environment Protection Act 1993*.
- Respond to reports of illegal dumping/illegal waste activity and provide regular public information on incidents.
- Undertake targeted non-licensed compliance programs, including houseboat wastewater.

Outcomes

- Fewer incidents affecting people and the environment
- Improved practices and behaviour by industry and communities

To manage radiation impacts, the EPA will...

- Ensure competent people and organisations are appropriately licenced to use, advise, undertake compliance testing and manage radiation.
- Ensure accidents and incidents are identified, reported, responded to and effectively managed.
- Provide accurate and timely advice to the regulated community and other stakeholders on risks associated with unacceptable radiation exposure.

Outcomes

- Radiation sources are controlled
- Radiation regulations are understood by industry

To protect people and the environment from site contamination, the EPA will...

- Require assessment and where necessary remediation of site contamination that poses an actual or potential risk to human health or the environment.
- Implement and regulate a site contamination audit system.
- Plan and implement the SA government funded orphan site scheme.
- Require liable persons to engage with communities that may be affected by site contamination.

Outcomes

- Reduced risk from site contamination
- Improved awareness of legacy contamination

The EPA will collaborate with other regulators on matters of mutual interest including...

- Supporting local government in the implementation of the *Local Nuisance & Litter Control Act 2016*.
- Sharing information with SafeWork SA and jointly responding to issues including asbestos.
- Co-regulating the mining and petroleum industry under an MOU with the Department of Energy and Mining.
- Consulting with SA Health and seeking advice on issues that may have public health impacts under a renewed Working Together agreement.
- Supporting PIRSA in the assessment and regulation of aquaculture activities licensed under the *Aquaculture Act 2001*.

Outcomes

- Improved decision making of state and local government

To ensure that our compliance approach reflects best practice, the EPA will...

- Implement regulatory waste reforms for mass balance reporting.
- Simplify licence requirements for monitoring for low risk wineries across the state following the review of monitoring programs.
- Review and update guidelines for wastewater irrigation to ensure they are user friendly and appropriate, and then inform key licensees of the changes made.
- Set standards with updated licence conditions relating to septage management for waste transporters and respond to reports of non-compliance. Ensure that landholders who receive septage are aware of their obligations.
- Encourage development of a plan for the sustainable management of wastewater in the Mount Barker region to prevent and minimise environmental impact from the discharge to waters.
- Undertake an assessment on the management of liquid hazardous waste in SA.
- Apply intelligence techniques to support in the identification of issues, trends, risks and patterns of behaviour across our operating environment.

Outcomes

- EPA interventions and enforcement are effective
- Environmental regulations are understood by industry

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