

Water Quality in Ireland

2004-2006



Environmental Protection Agency

AGENCY STATUS

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is an independent public body established in July 1993 under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992. Its sponsor in Government is the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The EPA is managed by a full time Executive Board consisting of a Director General and four Directors. Independence is assured through the selection procedures for the Director General and Directors and the freedom, as provided in the legislation, to act on its own initiative. The assignment, under the legislation, of direct responsibility for a wide range of functions underpins this independence. Under legislation, it is a specific offence to attempt to influence the Agency, or anyone acting on its behalf, in an improper manner.

The Agency is assisted by an Advisory Committee of twelve members, appointed by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The EPA has a wide range of statutory duties and powers under the Environmental Protection Act. In addition, the capacity of the EPA in relation to enforcement has been enhanced by powers contained in the Protection of the Environment Act 2003. The main responsibilities of the EPA include the following:

- licensing large/complex industrial and other processes with significant polluting potential;
 - monitoring environmental quality, including the establishment of databases to which the public have access;
 - publishing periodic reports on the state of the environment;
 - promoting environmentally sound practices;
 - promoting and co-ordinating environmental research;
 - licensing all significant waste disposal and recovery activities, including landfills, and the preparation of a national hazardous waste management plan;
 - implementing a system of permitting for the control of VOC emissions resulting from the storage of significant quantities of petrol at terminals;
 - implementing and enforcing the GMO Regulations for the contained and deliberate release of GMOs into the environment;
 - preparing and implementing a national hydrometric programme;
 - drafting a National Allocation Plan for greenhouse gas emissions allowance trading; the establishment of a National Competent Authority for the issuing of trading permits and allowances to those covered by the scheme; the monitoring, overseeing and verification of emissions from participating companies; and the establishment of a National Emissions Trading Registry;
- and, under the Office of Environmental Enforcement, established in 2003 and dedicated to the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation in Ireland:
- improving overall compliance with environmental protection legislation in Ireland;
 - raising awareness about the importance of enforcement of environmental protection legislation in Ireland;
 - enforcing IPPC licences and Waste licences issued by the EPA;
 - auditing and reporting on the performance of local authorities in the discharge of their environmental protection functions, including:
 - enforcement in respect of breaches of waste permits,
 - taking action in relation to illegal dumping,
 - implementation of waste collection permits, and
 - enforcement of producer responsibility initiatives (for example, in the area of packaging waste);
 - taking action against local authorities that are not discharging their environmental protection functions in an adequate manner;
 - prosecuting, or assisting local authorities to prosecute, significant breaches of environmental protection legislation, in a timely manner; and
 - assisting local authorities to improve their environmental protection performance on a case by case basis, through the establishment of an enforcement network to promote information exchange and best practice, and by the provision of appropriate guidance.



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An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

STÁDAS NA GNÍOMHAIREACHTA

Is comhlacht poiblí neamhspleách í an Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil (EPA) a bunaíodh i mí Iúil 1993 faoin Acht fán nGníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil, 1992. Ó thaobh an Rialtais, is í an Roinn Comhshaoil agus Rialtais Áitiúil a dhéanann urraíocht uirthi.

Déanann Bord Feidhmeach lánaimseartha comhdhéanta d'Ard-Stiúrthóir agus ceathrar Stiúrthóirí bainistíocht ar an EPA. Cinntítear neamhspleáchas trí nósanna imeachta roghnaithe i gcás an Ard-Stiúrthóra agus na Stiúrthóirí agus an tsaoirse, de réir mar a sholáthraítear sa reachtaíocht, gníomhú as a stuaim féin. Tá an sannadh, faoin reachtaíocht, maidir le freagracht dhíreach as réimse leathan feidhmeanna mar bhonn taca ag an neamhspleáchas sin. Faoin reachtaíocht, is cion sainsiúil é iarracht a dhéanamh tionchar a imirt ar an Ghníomhaireacht, nó ar aon duine a bhíonn ag gníomhú thar ceann na Gníomhaireachta, ar bhealach míchuí.

Cuidíonn Coiste Comhairleach ar a bhfuil dhá chomhalta déag arna gceapadh ag an Aire Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil leis an nGníomhaireacht.

FREAGRACHTAÍ

Tá réimse leathan dualgas agus cumhachtaí reachtúla ag an EPA faoin Acht fán nGníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil. Chomh maith leis sin, tá curtha le hacmhainn an EPA maidir le forfheidhmiú le cumhachtaí san Acht um Chaomhnú an Chomhshaoil 2003. Áirítear orthu seo a leanas príomhfhreagrachtaí an EPA:

- ceadúnú a dhéanamh ar phróisis thionsclaíocha mhóra/choimpléascacha a bhféadfadh cumas truaillithe suntasach a bheith ag baint leo;
- monatóireacht ar chaighdeán comhshaoil, lena n-áirítear bunachair shonraí a bhunú ar a mbeidh rochtain ag an bpobal;
- tuarascálacha tréimhsiúla maidir le staid an chomhshaoil a fhoilsiú;
- sárchleachtais comhshaoil a chur chun cinn;
- taighde comhshaoil a chur chun cinn agus a chomhordú;
- gníomhaíochtaí díúscartha dramhaíola agus aighabhála suntasacha, lena n-áirítear láithreacha líonta talún a cheadúnú agus plean bainistíochta guaisdramhaíola náisiúnta a ullmhú;
- córas a chur i bhfeidhm a cheadaíonn rialú astaithe VOC a bhíonn mar thoradh ar scaoileadh GMOanna isteach sa chomhshaoil in aon turas;

- rialacháin GMO a chur i bhfeidhm agus a fhorfheidhmiú ó thaobh GMOanna a choinneáil agus a scaoileadh amach sa chomhshaoil in aon turas;
- clár hidriméadrach náisiúnta a ullmhú agus a chur i bhfeidhm;
- dréacht a chur le chéile de Phlean Leithroinnte Náisiúnta do thrádáil liúntas astaithe gáis ceaptha teasa; Údarás Inniúla Náisiúnta a bhunú le ceadanna trádála agus liúntais a eisiúint orthu siúd atá clúdaithe ag an scéim; monatóireacht, léargas, agus fíorú maidir le hastuithe ó chuideachtaí rannpháirteacha; agus Clár Trádála Astuithe Náisiúnta a bhunú;

agus, faoin Oifig Forfheidhmiúcháin Comhshaoil, a bunaíodh i 2003 agus atá tiomanta as reachtaíocht comhshaoil a chur i bhfeidhm agus a fhorfheidhmiú in Éirinn;

- feabhas a chur ar chomhlíonadh reachtaíocht cosanta comhshaoil in Éirinn;
- feasacht a ardú maidir leis an tábhacht a bhaineann le forfheidhmiú i gcás reachtaíochta cosanta comhshaoil in Éirinn;
- ceadúnais IPPC agus ceadúnais Dramhaíola a eisiúint an EPA a fhorfheidhmiú;
- iniúchadh agus tuairiscí ar fheidhmíocht údarás áitiúil maidir lena bhfeidhmeanna cosanta comhshaoil a chur ar bun, lena n-áirítear:
 - forfheidhmiú maidir le ceadúnais dramhaíola a sháraítear;
 - gníomh maidir le dumpáil mhídhleathach;
 - ceadanna bailithe dramhaíola a chur i bhfeidhm, agus
 - tionscnaimh a bheidh mar fhreagracht ar an táirgeoir a fhorfheidhmiú (mar shampla, sa réimse a bhaineann le dramhaíl pacáiste);
- gníomh in aghaidh údarás áitiúil nach bhfuil ag comhlíonadh a gcuid feidhmeanna cosanta comhshaoil ar bhealach cuí;
- an dlí a chur nó cuidiú le húdarais áitiúla an dlí a chur ó thaobh sháraithe suntasacha reachtaíochta cosanta comhshaoil ar bhealach caoithiúil; agus
- cuidiú le húdarais áitiúla a gcuid feidhmíocht cosanta comhshaoil a fheabhsú ar bhonn cás ar chás, trí ghréasán forfheidhmithe a bhunú le malartú eolais a chur chun cinn chomh maith le sárchleachtas, agus trí threoír chuí a sholáthar.

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