



epa

Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

CUSTOMER CHARTER



EPA CUSTOMER CHARTER

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our various customers. Our aim is to be a customer focused organisation and to be courteous, helpful and timely in dealing with queries and requests.

WHO WE ARE

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for protecting and improving the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. We are committed to protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution. We play key roles in environmental regulation, provision of knowledge and advocacy for the environment.

OUR CUSTOMERS

The EPA customer base reflects the wide range of sectors and activities, that fall within our remit. Among our customers are the public, our licensees, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and other Government Departments, Local Authorities, other statutory bodies/statutory consultees, the media, the EPA Advisory Committee, environmental non-governmental organisations, representative sectoral bodies (e.g. IBEC and the IFA), the EU Commission, the European Environment Agency, OECD, third level colleges, primary and second level schools, consultants.

If you are affected by anything we do or if you have reason to contact us, you are one of our customers.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO OUR CUSTOMERS

We aim to provide an excellent service that reflects your needs and expectations. To achieve this we are committed to the following general service standards:

Timeliness and courtesy

Service by telephone:

Our LoCall number is 1890 33 55 99 (note that the rates charged for the use of 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers).

If you contact us by telephone, we will:

- ▶ answer your call promptly during office hours
- ▶ be courteous and identify ourselves and our area of work
- ▶ give you as much assistance as reasonably possible and provide you with accurate and clear information
- ▶ take your details and return your call if we cannot deal with your enquiry immediately and tell you when you can expect to hear from us again
- ▶ ensure that voice mail messages are updated regularly to inform you of the availability of individual staff members and respond to all voice mail messages promptly
- ▶ provide a 24 hour contact service for urgent environmental matters

Service by correspondence:

If you make enquiries by letter, fax or email, we will:

- ▶ respond to you in your preferred format (e.g. letter, fax, email and telephone) no later than 5 working days from receipt of the enquiry or within 20 working days in the case of an enquiry which is particularly complex
- ▶ contact and inform you when you can expect a full reply if we cannot meet these timeframes

- ▶ use clear language and explain any “unfamiliar” technical terms on request
- ▶ ensure that all our correspondence contains a contact name, telephone number, fax number and email address
- ▶ ensure that automated out of the office email replies are updated regularly by staff
- ▶ if your correspondence relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will endeavour to direct you to the relevant body

Visiting the EPA

If you visit our Headquarters or any of our Regional Inspectorates, we will:

- ▶ meet you punctually, if you have an appointment
- ▶ do our utmost to accommodate you if you don’t have an appointment
- ▶ treat you with courtesy, be as helpful as possible and respect your privacy
- ▶ aim to make appropriate facilities available to you during office hours
- ▶ ensure that our offices comply with occupational health and safety requirements
- ▶ aim to facilitate access for people with disabilities, and if we are unable to accommodate you at our offices, we will endeavour to make alternative access arrangements

Media Service

Our Media Relations Office phone number is (053) 9170770 (24 hours).

Through our Media Relations Office we will:

- ▶ provide a centralised approach to dealing with the media
- ▶ respond quickly to media queries and ensure that timely and accurate information on EPA activities is provided on request
- ▶ maintain an up to date News Centre on the EPA website www.epa.ie

Environmental Queries Desk

Through our environmental queries desk we will:

- ▶ provide information on specific environmental queries through our dedicated Environmental Queries Desk
- ▶ You can contact this desk by using the LoCall number 1890 33 55 99 or by sending in written correspondence by letter/fax, by email to info@epa.ie or by using our on-line Contact Us Environmental and Radiation Query Form <http://www.epa.ie/about/contactus/>

Equality and Diversity

We will:

- ▶ respect the principles of equality, and the diversity of our customers in the delivery of our services
- ▶ recognise our legal obligations under the Equal Status Acts and the Disability Act to provide access to our services
- ▶ deliver our services in an impartial manner with respect to our customers
- ▶ provide assistance for people with disabilities to access our services. The EPA has appointed Access Officers to provide assistance. Contact our Access Officers by telephone (053 9160600) or by email (accessofficer@epa.ie)

Information

We will:

- ▶ maintain a usable website which contains up to date information including EPA reports and answers to frequently asked questions
- ▶ continue to improve services for access to environmental information. All licensing files and Annual Environmental Reports (AER) for licences can be viewed either online or by appointment at one of our public offices
- ▶ continue to make information held by the EPA available either routinely or in accordance with relevant statutory provisions
- ▶ strive to make more information available electronically including through the EPA's online map-based service for the public called 'My Local Environment'
- ▶ endeavour to provide information in a form that is accessible to persons with disabilities

- ▶ provide information to people with disabilities in alternative formats in accordance with our Accessible Information Policy
- ▶ aim to ensure that any events (conferences, seminars, public meetings) organised by the EPA are accessible to all customers, in accordance with our Accessible Information Policy
- ▶ also provide information in accordance with requests received under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations (AIE) and Freedom of Information Acts (FOI)

Seirbhís trí Ghaeilge

Déanfaimid an méid seo a leanas:

- ▶ Gnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge le bailldén phobail ar mian leo é sin a dhéanamh, nuair is féidir
- ▶ ár gceangaltas a chomhlíonadh faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, 2003
- ▶ an Chairt Chustaiméirí a chur ar fáil i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge araon

Service in Irish

We will:

- ▶ where possible, facilitate members of the public who wish to conduct their business with us through Irish
- ▶ meet our commitments under the Official Languages Act, 2003
- ▶ make the Customer Charter available in both Irish and English

Help Us to Help You

You can help us by:

- ▶ quoting reference numbers when writing to us about an existing correspondence or query
- ▶ providing a daytime telephone number or email address in your correspondence if available
- ▶ letting us know in advance about any special requirements that you may have in accessing our services
- ▶ keeping appointments, providing correct information and treating our staff in the way that you would like to be treated yourself

Feedback

This Customer Charter is published to provide information about the standards we aim for in providing our services. You are therefore invited to comment on whether our standards are delivering the level of service you require and whether or not we deal effectively with your enquiries. Your comments are extremely useful to us in determining how we need to develop and improve our services and for updating the contents of this Charter. You can do this by providing comments or suggestions regarding the service you receive to the:

**QCS Officer, EPA, PO Box 3000,
Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford.**

Tel: 053 9160600 **Fax:** 053 9160699

Email: qcsofficer@epa.ie **Web:** www.epa.ie

Measuring and evaluating performance:

We will put appropriate mechanisms in place to measure and evaluate performance against the commitments in our Charter, which we will keep under review in order to continuously improve our service. We will report on our performance in our Annual Report.

We will use a range of measurements/evaluation tools to measure our performance including:

- ▶ feedback and suggestions from our customers on an ongoing basis
- ▶ consulting our customers
- ▶ using information systems to manage correspondence
- ▶ audits to ensure customer service tools we use are up to date
- ▶ using techniques such as mystery shopping

EPA Customer Service Complaint Procedure

While it is our aim to deliver a high quality service to our customers, we recognise that situations may arise in which a customer is dissatisfied with the quality of service provided. We have therefore drawn up a Customer Service Complaints Procedure set out below.

The issues that are covered by this procedure.

This procedure relates to customer complaints and comments relating directly to the quality of the service provided, for example:

- ▶ Complaints about issues such as delays, mistakes, non availability of information, quality of information available, lack of courtesy.
- ▶ Instances where you did not receive the quality of service you feel you are entitled to.
- ▶ Complaints under Section 39 of the Disability Act 2005 relating to access to our services, buildings or information
- ▶ Complaints about discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 1998 and 2004

It does not cover complaints about other activities of the EPA where there are existing statutory mechanisms in place to deal with complaints/appeals e.g. IPC, IED and Waste licensing, FOI etc.

Complaints in relation to staff members will be dealt with in accordance with the EPA's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

How to make a complaint about Customer Service

In the first instance the complaint should be directed to the QCS Officer who will direct it to an appropriate member of staff. The complaint may be submitted in writing (fax, letter, or email to qcsofficer@epa.ie) or via the Internet www.epa.ie.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible following the incident under complaint. The following information should be provided when available, in order to help us address or investigate the matter as soon as possible:

- ▶ your name and address
- ▶ precise details of your complaint
- ▶ the name of the office and if appropriate, the official(s) with whom you were dealing
- ▶ a day time telephone number, if you are happy for us to contact you by phone

How your complaint will be dealt with

We will deal with your complaint in a professional, prompt, impartial and sensitive manner.

Your complaint will be directed to an appropriate member of staff for careful examination. This person will not have been directly involved in the original action which gave rise to your complaint.

In general, we will investigate and address your complaint(s) and send a reply to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint(s). Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and work to resolve the complaint as soon as is practicable and keep you informed of progress.

On completion of investigation of your complaint we will where appropriate, acknowledge any mistakes on our part and review internal procedures or make changes, if required, so as to prevent a possible reoccurrence of this incident.

Appeals against the outcome of the complaint

If you are not satisfied with the response you received to a general complaint you may appeal it to the Quality Customer Service Officer.

**QCS Officer,
Environmental Protection Agency,
PO Box 3000,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
Co Wexford.**

Tel: 053 9160600 **Fax:** 053 9160699
Email: qcsofficer@epa.ie **Web:** www.epa.ie

If you are not satisfied with the response you received to a Disability Act complaint, you may refer the complaint to the Ombudsman.

**The Office of the Ombudsman,
18 Lower Leeson St.,
Dublin 2.**

Tel: 01 639 5600 **Fax:** 01 6395674
LoCall: 1890223030
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie **Web:** www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/

If you are not satisfied with the response you received to a complaint about discrimination under the Equal Status Acts, you may refer the complaint to the Equality Tribunal.

The Equality Tribunal

The Equality Tribunal, Davitt House, 65A Adelaide Road, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6136800 **Fax:** 01 6136801

Email: info@equalitytribunal.ie **Web:** www.equalitytribunal.ie

How to contact us

The EPA LoCall number is 1890 33 55 99 (note that the rates charged for the use of 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers).

Headquarters

Environmental Protection Agency

PO Box 3000, Johnstown Castle Estate, County Wexford, Ireland

Tel: 053 9160600 **Fax:** 053 9160699

Email: info@epa.ie or qcsofficer@epa.ie

Opening Hours 9.00am to 5.00pm

Regional Inspectorates

Inniscarra, Co.Cork

Tel: 021 4875540 **Fax:** 021 4875545

McCumiskey House, Richview, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14

Tel: 01 2680100 **Fax:** 01 2680199

Seville Lodge, Callan Road, Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7796700 **Fax:** 056 7796798

John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Tel: 094 9048400 **Fax:** 094 9021934

The Glen, Monaghan

Tel: 047 77600 **Fax:** 047 84987

Details about the various ways of contacting us can be found under the Contact Us section of our website at www.epa.ie

Headquarters

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Johnstown Castle Estate
County Wexford, Ireland

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F +353 53 9160699

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