



Customer Charter



EPA Customer Charter

We are committed to giving excellent service to our customers and to being courteous, helpful and timely in dealing with your 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. Our aim is to protect people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution. We do this in many ways. Some of the most important ways are:

- ▶ licensing waste facilities, waste water discharges, large-scale industrial production and intensive agriculture;
- ▶ monitoring, analysing and reporting particularly on water and air quality;
- ▶ enforcing environmental laws and regulations;
- ▶ regulating greenhouse gas emissions;
- ▶ providing advice and guidance to Government, industry and the public on environmental and radiological protection;
- ▶ encouraging businesses, communities and the public to become more environmentally aware and to use resources efficiently; and
- ▶ funding environmental research to contribute to policy decisions and provide solutions.

Our customers

Our wide range of customers includes just about everyone in Ireland.

You

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

National customers

This includes the public, our licensees, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and other government departments. It also includes local authorities, other statutory bodies and the media. We consult with the EPA Advisory Committee, environmental non-governmental organisations, representatives of businesses, farming and other sectors, such as IBEC and the IFA, third-level colleges, primary and second-level schools, and consultants (for example environmental and engineering consultants).

International customers

We also consider some international organisations as customers including the EU Commission, the European Environment Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Our staff

We consider our staff as 'internal customers' and support and consult them about how we deliver our services.

Our commitments to you

We aim to provide an excellent service that reflects your needs and expectations. We promise to be courteous in all our dealings with you and to respond promptly when you contact us. We will continue to take a co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivering services to our customers. This will include designing and delivering our services from your point of view.

This Charter explains how we will do this. It also tells you how to make a complaint if you are not happy with our customer service.

Service by phone

Our LoCall number is 1890 33 55 99. (Please note that different service providers may charge different rates for 1890 numbers.)

If you phone us, we will:

- ▶ answer your call promptly during office hours;
- ▶ be courteous and identify ourselves and our area of work;
- ▶ give you as much help as we can together with accurate and clear information;
- ▶ take your details and return your call if we cannot deal with your query immediately and tell you when you can expect to hear from us again;

- ▶ update our voicemail messages to say when individual staff members are available and respond to all voicemail messages promptly; and
- ▶ provide a 24-hour contact service for urgent environmental matters.

Service by writing

If you write to us by letter, fax or email, we will:

- ▶ reply to you by letter, fax or email within five working days from the time we receive your enquiry or within 20 working days if your enquiry is particularly complex;
- ▶ write and tell you when you can expect a full reply if we cannot deal with your enquiry within these times;
- ▶ use clear language and explain any technical terms;
- ▶ include a contact name, phone number, fax number and email address in our correspondence;
- ▶ update our 'out-of-office' email messages to say when individual staff members are available; and
- ▶ direct you to the relevant public body if your enquiry relates to something that comes within their area rather than ours.

Visiting the EPA

If you visit our headquarters or regional inspectorate offices we will:

- ▶ see you at the agreed time if you have an appointment;
- ▶ do our best to see you if you don't have an appointment;

- ▶ treat you with courtesy, be as helpful as possible and respect your privacy;
- ▶ make sure our offices comply with occupational health and safety requirements; and
- ▶ try to facilitate access if you have a disability and, if we can't do that at our offices, try to make alternative access arrangements for you.

Media Service

Our Media Relations Unit phone number is (053) 917 0770. This is a 24-hour number.

If you are a journalist, we will:

- ▶ deal with your query through our Media Relations Unit;
- ▶ respond quickly to queries with timely and accurate information on EPA activities; and
- ▶ keep an up-to-date News Centre on our website, www.epa.ie

Environmental Queries Desk

Our dedicated Environmental Queries Desk deals with specific environmental queries. You can contact the Queries Officer:

- ▶ by using our online Environmental/Radiation Query Form at www.epa.ie/about/contactus;
- ▶ by e-mail (info@epa.ie), by letter or fax;
- ▶ by phone (LoCall 1890 33 55 99).

Equality and diversity

We will:

- ▶ respect the principles of equality and diversity in how we provide services to you;
- ▶ recognise our legal obligations under the Equal Status Acts and the Disability Act to provide access to our services;
- ▶ deliver our services to you in an impartial way; and
- ▶ help you to access our services if you have a disability. We have dedicated Access Officers. You can contact them by phone (+353 53 916 0600) or by email (accessofficer@epa.ie).

Information

We will:

- ▶ keep our website up to date with EPA reports and answers to Frequently Asked Questions;
- ▶ continue to improve access to environmental information. For instance, you can view all licensing files and annual environmental reports for licensees online or by appointment at one of our public offices;
- ▶ make available information held by us;
- ▶ provide timely and easily accessible environmental information to encourage public participation (for example, online resources like Ireland's Environment, Radon Maps, My Local Environment);
- ▶ provide information so that it is accessible to people with disabilities;

- ▶ make sure that the conferences, seminars and public meetings we organise are accessible to people with disabilities; and
- ▶ provide information in response to requests under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations (AIE), Freedom of Information Acts (FOI) and Data Protection Regulations.

Seirbhís trí Ghaeilge

Déanfaimid an méid seo a leanas:

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

Service in Irish

We will:

- ▶ where possible, communicate with you in Irish, if you wish;
- ▶ meet our commitments under the Official Languages Act, 2003; and
- ▶ make this 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 query;
- ▶ giving a daytime phone number or email address when you write to us;
- ▶ telling us in advance about any special needs you may have in accessing our services;
- ▶ keeping appointments;
- ▶ giving correct information; and
- ▶ treating our staff in the way that you would like to be treated yourself.

Feedback

We like to hear your views on our customer service standards and whether we dealt effectively with your queries. Your comments help us to develop and improve our services. Please send your comments or suggestions to:

Quality Customer Service Officer, EPA, PO Box 3000
Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford

Tel: +353 53 916 0600 **Fax:** +353 53 916 0699

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

Eircode: Y35 W821

Measuring and evaluating performance

We measure and evaluate our performance against the commitments in this Charter so that we can continuously improve our customer service. We report on our performance in our annual report.

We use a range of methods to measure our performance including:

- ▶ consultation with our customers; and
- ▶ feedback and suggestions from customers.

EPA Customer Service Complaints Procedure

Our aim is to provide a high-quality customer service. However, we know that there may be times where you may not be satisfied with the quality of our service. Our Customer Service Complaints Procedure explains how you can make a complaint.

What issues are covered by the customer service complaints procedure?

This procedure covers complaints that relate directly to the quality of service we provide, for example:

- ▶ complaints about delays, mistakes, lack of available information, poor quality of information, 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; and
- ▶ complaints about discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 1998 and 2004.

What issues are not covered by the complaints procedure?

The procedure does not cover complaints about:

- ▶ activities where there are statutory mechanisms to deal with complaints and appeals such as our licensing process (for example, licensing of waste facilities and large industrial activities), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and
- ▶ staff members who will be dealt with in line with our Grievance Policy and Procedures.

How can I make a complaint about customer service?

Your complaint must be in writing. It should be addressed to the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Officer who will direct it to the relevant member of staff. You can send us your complaint by fax, letter, email (qcsofficer@epa.ie) or through our website, www.epa.ie

Please send in your complaint as soon as possible after the incident. Include the following information to help us address or investigate the matter:

- ▶ your name and address;
- ▶ precise details of your complaint;
- ▶ the name of the office and, if appropriate, the official or officials you dealt with; and
- ▶ a daytime phone number, if you are happy for us to contact you by phone.

How will you deal with my complaint?

We will deal with your complaint in a professional, prompt, fair and sensitive way.

We will ask an appropriate member of staff to investigate your complaint. This person will not have been directly involved in the original action which gave rise to your complaint.

We will write to you within 20 working days of the date we received your complaint and tell you what we found. If we cannot finish our investigation within 20 days, we will write and tell you when you can expect an answer from us.

When we have finished investigating your complaint, we will acknowledge any mistakes on our part. We will also review our procedures and make changes, if needed, so that the situation you complained about does not happen again.

Can I appeal the outcome of the complaint?

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you may appeal it to the EPA Quality Customer Service Officer. Your appeal must be in writing and sent to:

Quality Customer Service Officer
Environmental Protection Agency
PO Box 3000
Johnstown Castle Estate
Co Wexford
Y35 W821

Tel: +353 53 916 0600 **Fax:** +353 53 916 0699

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

Complaint under the Disability Act?

If your complaint comes under the Disability Act and you are not satisfied with our response, you may refer the complaint to the Ombudsman.

The Office of the Ombudsman
18 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2
D02 HE97

Tel: +353 1 639 5600 **Fax:** +353 1 639 5674

LoCall: 1890 22 30 30 **Email:** info@ombudsman.ie

Web: www.ombudsman.ie

Complaint under the Equal Status Acts?

If your complaint came under the Equal Status Acts and you are not satisfied with our response, you may refer the complaint to the:

Workplace Relations Commission
O'Brien Road
Carlow, R93 W7W2

Tel: +353 59 917 8990

Fax: +353 59 917 8911

LoCall: 1890 80 80 90

Web: www.workplacereactions.ie

How to contact us

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

Headquarters

Environmental Protection Agency
PO Box 3000, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford,
Y35 W821

Tel: +353 53 916 0600 **Fax:** +353 53 916 0699

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

Opening Hours: 9 am to 5 pm.

You can also contact us through our Regional Inspectorates. You will find their contact details on the back of this Charter and under the Contact Us section of our website, www.epa.ie

