

Environmental Protection Agency

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 the provision of environmental knowledge, implementation of environmental regulation and advocacy for the environment.

Vision A clean, healthy and well protected environment supporting a sustainable society and economy.

WHAT WE DO

Knowledge

Provide high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, assessments and evidence to inform decision making by citizens, businesses and Government.

Regulation

Implement effective regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good outcomes for people and the environment and target those who don't comply.

Advocacy

Work with others to advocate for a clean, healthy and well protected environment and sustainable environmental behaviour.

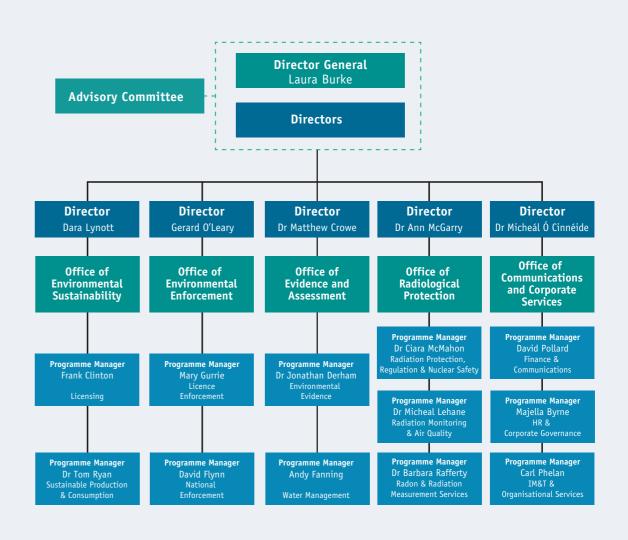
HOW WE DO IT





Partnering Awareness Sustainable Raising **Networking** Behaviour

Organisational Structure - January 2016



Key Statistics 2015 in Numbers

LICENCES

licences issued

technical amendments completed

ENFORCEMENT

inspections to urban

waste water sites

1,300+ visits to industrial and

waste facilities

prosecution cases

drinking water site

Drinking water Directions issued to Irish Water

new research projects awarded

WASTE

53%

decrease in waste being landfilled between 2011 and 2014.

50%

increase in 2014 in waste being exported as a fuel.

INFORMATION

13,000 1.5m+

EPA Twitter Followers across 7 Twitter accounts

visits to the EPA website www.epa.ie

2,500+ 108 queries from the public

information requests (65 AIE & 43 FOI)



Green Business savings identified

Average €41,000 savings identified for Green **Business** companies

1,705

2015 in Review

Climate Change



2015 saw a major step forward in global and local actions on climate change. The adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change in December provides an ambitious, legally binding framework for global action. In Ireland, climate legislation was enacted for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. However, the EPA's greenhouse gas

projections, released in May, indicate that Ireland faces significant challenges in becoming a low carbon economy. Ireland's EU 2020 reduction target is 20 per cent relative to emissions in 2005. It affects all sectors except those companies participating in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). EPA projections show that emissions from non-ETS sectors will be 14 per cent below 2005 levels under best case scenario. Over 70 per cent of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions come from three sectors: agriculture (33%), transport (19%) and energy (19%). Provisional greenhouse gas emissions figures for 2014, released in December, show a slight fall (0.7 %) overall compared to 2013 figures, despite increases in the some sectors.

Globally, greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced to near or below zero before the end of this century. EPA data and reports have highlighted that Ireland must follow a pathway to decarbonising energy, transport and heating. The agriculture, forestry and land use sectors should achieve effective greenhouse gas emissions neutrality by 2050. This will take planning, investment and time but can be achieved in the overall framework of national, EU and global commitments.

Drinking Water

EPA records showed that 6,000 people were on a long term boil water notice in October, down from a peak of 23,000 in early 2015. Supplies in need of improvement to ensure the safety and security of drinking water stood at 112 by October. Although 99 per cent of samples taken during 2014 complied with microbiological and chemical standards, an increased pace of investment in drinking water infrastructure is required to eliminate the risk of *Cryptosporidium* and the risk of long term boil water notices. As water quality regulator, the EPA has also called for comprehensive national strategies to address priorities such as appropriate disinfection, lead, pesticides and water safety planning.



Waste Water Treatment

In November, the EPA called for a reversal of the decline in capital expenditure for waste water treatment seen in recent years to prevent the adverse environmental and public health effects associated with sewage. There is also a need to improve the operation and management of existing waste water plants.



The EPA's *Urban Waste Water Treatment report for 2014* recorded that untreated sewage was still being discharged at 45 urban areas, with counties Cork, Donegal and Galway the worst affected areas. Of the 174 large urban areas with waste water treatment, 143 (82%) achieved the mandatory EU quality standards with 12 not meeting the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive's requirement to provide secondary treatment. Waste water discharges contributed to poor bathing water quality at seven designated bathing waters in 2014.

A review of the first year of National Inspection Plan for domestic waste water treatment systems, during which local authority inspectors carried out 987 inspections showed that almost half of household septic tanks failed initial inspection. Following remediation work by householders, 79 per cent of the inspected systems complied with the regulations.

Industrial & Waste Licence Enforcement

In 2015, the EPA conducted over 1,300 site visits at licensed facilities. Enforcement focuses in particular on facilities that pose a risk to the environment and public health and the EPA continues to take action against companies and their directors to ensure compliance.



In terms of controlling pollutant emissions to atmosphere, the performance of over 750 EPA licensed activities is generally very good, as confirmed in the EPA Licensed Sites – Report on Air Emissions 2014, released in August. However, more than 750 complaints about odour nuisance from licensed sites were made to the EPA by the public during 2014. Almost all of these related to the Waste Management and Food & Drink sectors with ten sites accounting for almost 70 per cent of the complaints. A further 149 complaints were made relating to noise and five sites accounted for nearly 80 per cent of these complaints.

The EPA Licensed Sites - Report on Waste Enforcement 2014 was released in December. The report highlighted that EPA inspections identified poor management and storage of waste at some facilities, giving rise to unacceptable odour nuisance and fire risk and this is a priority issue for EPA enforcement.

Bathing Water



Overall, the quality of Ireland's bathing waters continues to be very good. New EU standards introduced in 2014 provide a much higher level of protection for bathers. In 2014, 94 per cent of Irish bathing waters met the new stricter standards and three quarters of bathing waters were rated as being of 'Excellent' quality. Of 136 identified bathing waters, seven failed to comply with the minimum mandatory standard and were classified as being of 'Poor' quality. Pollution sources appeared to be mainly linked to the impacts of wastewater discharges. The EPA is also now reporting on other non-designated beaches which are being monitored by local authorities such as Green Coast beaches.

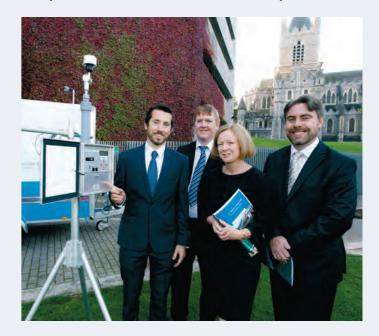
Water Quality



The quality of Irish groundwater and surface waters are among the best in Europe, however, meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive over the coming years will prove challenging for Ireland. Despite some modest recent improvement in the quality of our waters, as reported in the Water Quality in Ireland report published in 2015, many impacts need to be addressed to bring all waters up to a satisfactory level and to protect waters already in good condition. Eutrophication from nutrient enrichment continues to be the main issue facing Irish waters. The most recent water status assessment shows that approximately half of the rivers, lakes and estuaries assessed, and four per cent of our coastal waters (by area), require improvement to achieve satisfactory condition.

Clean Air

Environmental protection and health protection are inextricably linked. While Ireland's air quality is good, relative to other EU member states, maintaining good air quality everywhere in Ireland is a growing challenge. When releasing the 2014 air quality report in September, the EPA recommended that two key issues impacting on air quality in Ireland need to be tackled - transport emissions in large urban areas and emissions from smoky fuels in our small towns around the country.



Though Ireland did not exceed any legal EU limit values in 2014 for ambient air quality at any of the air quality network monitoring stations, particulate matter and ozone exceeded World Health Organisation guideline values in 2014 at some monitoring stations. The EPA has therefore called for movement towards the adoption of the stricter WHO air quality guidelines in EU legislation, in particular for particulates and ozone.

As legal standards, these would provide a greater level of protection of air quality and public health across Europe and in Ireland. Dioxin levels continue to compare favourably with previous EPA studies and other EU countries.



Accessible Information

Providing high quality, timely environmental information allows for informed decision making by citizens and businesses as well as Government. The EPA is continually looking at more accessible ways to deliver public data. In 2015 the EPA redesigned the Ireland's Environment web resource to allow users to more easily view the data and also download it in various formats. The EPA won the 2016 eGovernment General Award for the resource. The EPA's mapping service, My Local Environment, provides local environmental information within a 1 – 15km radius. In 2015 the online resource was expanded to include the national radon map. The EPA also developed an Android version of the successful 'See it? Say it!' iOS app, providing a convenient way for people to report environmental pollution using their mobile phones. 'See it? Say it!' links to the local authority-run www.fixyourstreet.ie web service.

AUGUST

Water Quality in

Ireland Report

JANUARY

Eco Eye TV series, in which the EPA participates, averaged 0.5m viewers/episode.



Review of *National* Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water

FEBRUARY

Treatment Systems

MARCH

EPA Climate Change public lecture by Prof Myles Allen: The role of climate change in storms and floods



European Environment Agency's report The European Environment state and outlook



Android version of the successful EPA reporting app See it? Say it!

APRIL

MAY

International IPCC Expert Meeting on Climate Change, Food and Agriculture in Duhlin



Significant Water Management Issues consultation event

12th National Radon Forum

EPA National Water Conference



Inaugural Green Business National Conference

JUNE



effective

EPA's new Radiological Protection Advisory Committee

Inaugural Meeting of

11th Annual

Conference

Environment Ireland

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

2,000 farmers take part in Farm Hazardous Waste Collection



European Commission waste infringement case closed through radical reform of waste enforcement in Ireland

Jenzsoph Ltd fined €20m, the largest fine ever imposed in the State for environmental









Radon Awareness

Ireland's Greenhouse gas emissions inventory 1990 - 2014(provisional)

DECEMBER

Paris Agreement:

adopt the first-ever

195 countries

universal, legally

binding global

climate deal

NOVEMBER



Excellent

Strategic Goals for the period 2016-2020

Outcomes Goals **Objectives** What we will have achieved by 2020 ▲ A risk-based, responsive regulatory approach that engages stakeholders and protects the environment and people. ▲ Reduced environmental risks at EPA regulated **Ensure** the on-going development of a **Trusted** facilities through tailored interventions and by proportionate and effective regulatory approach. **Environmental** ensuring appropriate financial provisions are in Align EPA resources to target interventions Regulator and reduce environmental risk. management of water and waste infrastructure. ▲ More timely evidence-based environmental assessments to inform policy and decision Realise the full potential of the EPA's knowledge, making at national, regional and local levels. Leader in skill, expertise and regional presence as key ▲ Better provision of online, up-to-date and **Environmental** national resources in the protection of the accessible information on the environment **Evidence &** environment and human health. to stakeholders. **Knowledge** Accelerate the provision of timely and tailored ▲ A research programme that addresses information to meet the specific needs of knowledge gaps and helps identify stakeholder groups. solutions to emerging and complex environmental problems. ▲ Targeted opportunities to integrate environmental priorities and sustainability into **Strengthen** the EPA's capability and capacity sectoral, economic and social policies. to influence, advocate and partner to help achieve a clean, healthy and well protected ▲ Developed public participation programmes to **Effective** environment. increase awareness of environmental issues Advocate and support the engagement of the public in **Engage** the public in the protection and and Partner improvement of the environment. environmental protection. **Promote** a greater awareness of the impact ▲ Collaborated with health agencies and other of environment quality on human health. bodies to realise the benefits of a good environment for health and wellbeing. ▲ Effective and resilient structures in place to deliver better outcomes for water quality. **Tackle** the challenges to deliver improved water Responding ▲ Established a climate change secretariat in the quality in Ireland. to Kev EPA as a centre of excellence that supports the **Engage** with other strategic partners to promote **Environmental** national transition to a low carbon economy. the development of a holistic national response to climate change. **Challenges** ▲ Strengthened the air quality and radiation protection frameworks to further protect **Enhance** air and radiation protection in Ireland. people and the environment. ▲ Our functions and resources aligned to **Develop** our staff and align our organisation be responsive and adaptable to meet to deliver best environmental outcomes. **Organisationally** emerging challenges. Focus on the development and promotion of

organisational health, wellbeing and safety at

Promote a culture of leadership, reform and

innovation.

▲ Engaged all staff to foster a supportive.

organisational change and in the use of

ICT to support reform and innovation.

workplace environment.

In Enhanced capacity in the area of





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