



# Office of Environmental Assistance

Protecting Michigan's Environment, Ensuring Michigan's Future

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
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[WWW.MICHIGAN.GOV/DEQOEA](http://WWW.MICHIGAN.GOV/DEQOEA)

The Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) within the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) works with state agencies, businesses, local communities, and the public to promote actions that enhance Michigan's environment, natural resources, economy, and quality of life. We accomplish this through compliance assistance on environmental regulations, encouraging environmental stewardship practices, and coordinating DEQ service-improvement programs.

## *Executive, Administration and Internal Services*

**Strategic Planning & Dashboard.** The OEA tracks the department's progress in achieving public and environmental health goals and shares the information with the public.

**Process Improvements.** The OEA improves work place efficiency by routinely evaluating processes, issuing recommendations, and eliminating redundancies in agency processes.

**Professional Development.** The OEA coordinates a Leadership Academy and other training initiatives for staff of the Departments of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, and Agriculture and Rural Development, known as the Quality of Life (QOL).

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** The OEA coordinates the timely fulfillment of requests for information made through the FOIA.

## *Compliance Assistance*

[www.michigan.gov/environmentalassistance](http://www.michigan.gov/environmentalassistance)

Through outreach strategies, incentive programs, informational resources, and one-on-one assistance, staff help regulated entities understand what is statutorily required of them and how to achieve and maintain compliance.

**Environmental Assistance Center (EAC).** This is the main access point to DEQ programs. The EAC provides direct one-on-one assistance or a referral to program staff within the DEQ. Operators are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 800-662-9278 or via email at [deq-assist@michigan.gov](mailto:deq-assist@michigan.gov).

**Environmental Audit Privilege and Immunity.** This confidential program provides incentives for entities to perform environmental self-audits and promptly report and correct violations. In some cases administrative fines and penalties may be waived for regulated parties.

**Permit Coordination.** The DEQ implements more than 65 permit, license, and certification programs. The OEA experts help customers identify DEQ permits that are needed to conduct their business within Michigan.

**Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Title III (SARA Title III).** Also known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, SARA Title III is a federally-mandated program that requires certain facilities to report hazardous chemical inventories, hazardous chemical releases, and toxic chemical release inventories. The Community Right-to-Know provisions increase the public's access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, chemical uses, and releases into the environment. The OEA advances public safety by administering the reporting requirements of SARA Title III and providing assistance and training to regulated facilities, local emergency planning committees, and fire departments.

## **Environmental Education**

[www.michigan.gov/deqenvd](http://www.michigan.gov/deqenvd)

The OEA helps Michigan citizens understand their relationship and impact upon our environment. The OEA provides environmental information in several ways:

**Curriculum and Support Materials.** The OEA delivers curriculum and support materials for educators at the elementary and middle school levels. The Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum Support (MEECS) is a science-based curriculum developed with units covering Land Use, Land and Environment, Ecosystems & Biodiversity, Water Quality, Air Quality, Energy Resources, Climate Change, and Outdoor Education.

**Partnerships.** The OEA provides support and partnerships with organizations focused on education at all levels, in support of environmental education.

**Internship Program.** The OEA coordinates a vibrant internship program to provide students with real exposures to environmental work.

**Earth Day.** The OEA organizes an annual Earth Day celebration for youth to celebrate and learn about the environment.

## **Pollution Prevention (P2) & Stewardship**

[www.michigan.gov/p2](http://www.michigan.gov/p2)

Targeting businesses, institutions, and communities in Michigan, the P2 and stewardship teams provide practical information and technical assistance to eliminate or reduce the generation of waste at its source or the recycling of waste that can't be eliminated. This includes working with industry and academia to encourage the design, purchase, and use of less toxic chemicals.

**Clean Corporate Citizen (C3) and Neighborhood Environmental Partners (NEP).** These voluntary programs publicly recognize regulated establishments for demonstrating a strong environmental ethic and measurable commitment to environmental stewardship.

**Community P2 Grants.** Grant funds are available to local and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, regional planning agencies, and local health departments to support community-based P2 projects.

**P2 Field Operations.** Field staff located at several district offices meet with local governments, businesses, environmental organizations, and others to promote P2 and OEA programs.

**Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Program (RETAP).** Retired engineers and other retired professionals provide confidential, free, and non-regulatory on-site assessments to identify opportunities for P2 and energy efficiency improvements. The RETAP assessments are available to Michigan businesses with fewer than 500 employees, including agribusinesses and institutions.

**Small Business P2 Loan Program.** Small businesses of 500 employees or less can apply for low-interest loans of up to \$400,000 at interest rates of 5 percent or less. Projects that eliminate or minimize waste generation through energy or water conservation, source reduction, or recycling are eligible for loan funding under this program.

## **Training & Outreach**

[www.michigan.gov/deqworkshops](http://www.michigan.gov/deqworkshops)

The OEA coordinates training events and develops publications that educate customers on environmental requirements, P2 practices, and other topics related to the DEQ's mission.

**Conferences, Workshops, Webinars, and On-line/On-Demand Videos.** In collaboration with internal and external partners, the OEA provides training opportunities on regulatory topics, environmental performance programs, P2, compliance assistance, and new technologies.

**Outreach and Communication Resources.** The Environmental Assistance Bulletin, published quarterly, gives updates on topics of environmental interest. The DEQ Calendar, published every two weeks, lists upcoming permit and other environmental decisions; proposed settlements of contested cases; administrative rules promulgation; announcements; public meetings and hearings; permitting contacts; and conferences, workshops, and training programs.

**Sector Initiatives.** The OEA develops industry-focused training and publications to enhance compliance and natural resource protection and increase awareness of new regulations and their benefits.

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The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, or political beliefs. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Quality of Life Human Resources, PO Box 30473, Lansing, MI 48909.