

The Advocate

For and about small businesses and local governments affected by environmental regulations

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TCEQ Responds When Duty Calls

The TCEQ Strike Team is trained to confront all sorts of emergencies. But back-to-back hurricanes along the Gulf Coast was a scenario that few had anticipated. The 14-member Strike Team and scores of other TCEQ employees reported for duty in Texas and Louisiana, addressing environmental hazards and helping to restore vital public services.

The Strike Team is a select group of agency personnel trained to deal with natural or man-made events that trigger an environmental crisis. In Louisiana, the team and agency specialists in surface water quality monitoring searched for leaking industrial tanks, floating hazardous

waste, "orphaned" petroleum drums, and other environmental problems. Once hazards were identified, each group would use satellite coordinates to log the locations for recovery teams. Other TCEQ staff members collected water samples and helped conduct analyses. With floodwaters showing unusually high levels of contaminants, it was important to identify the toxins as soon as possible.

All these duties were suspended once the TCEQ got word that a mega-storm was moving toward

Texas. The day after Hurricane Rita made landfall near Sabine Pass, the Strike Team and staff from several regional offices converged on the area. Strike team members participated in flyover reconnaissance missions to inspect damage to oil refineries and other industrial facilities, and surveyed communities to determine the extent



of damage to drinking water and wastewater treatment plants. Early on, the agency identified about 200 public drinking water systems that were not functioning. For these facilities, staff helped line up generators and needed fuel.

Staff from the Beaumont office responded to the needs of many small drinking water systems affected by the hurricane. With power lines down in many areas of the region, generators were needed to maintain a safe water supply to thousands of rural Texans. TCEQ staff worked with federal and local authorities to locate water systems needing assistance and deliver needed equipment and supplies.

Other TCEQ activities included assessing spills, consulting on debris removal, contacting landfills, and inspecting contaminated sites. Specialists investigated fish kills to determine whether the origins of contamination were industrial, municipal, or nonpoint sources. ■

EPA Issues Compliance Assistance Guide for Construction

The Environmental Protection Agency has published *Managing Your Environmental Responsibilities: A Planning Guide for Construction and Development* (commonly called "the MYER Guide"). The guide was created through a joint effort of industries, states, other federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and the EPA.

The MYER Guide contains two different sets of checklists and a detailed discussion with case studies on major environmental areas affecting the construction industry. It is designed to help the construction industry understand which environmental rules apply to them during different phases of a construction project. Each checklist or chapter can be pulled out and used in the field. Readers will find answers to many environmental questions and can conduct self audits by using the self-audit checklists.

You can obtain an electronic copy from the Construction Industry Compliance Assistance Center at its Web site (www.cicacenter.org/links), or a printed copy from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) by calling 800/490-9198. If calling, please specify document number EPA305-B-04-003 when requesting a copy. ■

Many Benefit from Compliance Assistance in 2005

Throughout the year, the Small Business & Local Government Assistance (SBLGA) program works with business owners and local governments to help them understand and comply with environmental rules. For fiscal year 2005, we responded to approximately 7,100 requests for assistance. Figures 1 and 2 show the topics that small businesses and local governments called about over the last two years.

Do you have questions about the requirements that apply at your site? If you have questions about what is required for any of the topics shown on Figures 1 or 2, call 1-800-447-2827.

When the hotline is not ringing, SBLGA also manages the **Compliance Commitment (C2)** program to provide evaluations of a site's environmental compliance. After the operator corrects any noted problems and demonstrates complete compliance, the

site is eligible for C2 partnership. C2 partners earn a one-year exemption from scheduled inspections by the TCEQ, EPA, and local enforcement programs in Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, Galveston, Pasadena, and Harris County.

Over the past year,

- More than 380 visits were conducted for over 310 small businesses and local governments;
- 80 sites demonstrated full compliance and became C2 Partners;
- sites that had two visits reached a compliance rate of more than 90 percent!

Some small businesses and local governments need extra help to achieve compliance. For these sites, SBLGA has a group of dedicated environmental professionals who volunteer their time. These **EnviroMentors** provide detailed "hands on" compliance assistance. In fiscal year 2005, EnviroMentors:

- Logged over 670 hours of volunteered time, valued at approximately \$73,000;
- Provided help to 31 small businesses and local governments.

A variety of special projects were used to inform small businesses and local governments about their environmental obligations. These projects helped operations as varied as:

- waste water systems
- liquid waste generators and transporters
- landfills
- petroleum storage tank owners
- public water systems
- builders and others in the construction industry
- auto salvage yards and auto body or repair shops
- dry cleaners
- surface coating operations
- metal finishing operations

If you are in one of these sectors, SBLGA has special materials to help you. Call us at 1-800-447-2827 or go to www.sblga.info for tools to help you meet TCEQ and EPA rules. ■

Figure 1. Top Regulatory Issues for Small Businesses (Statewide)

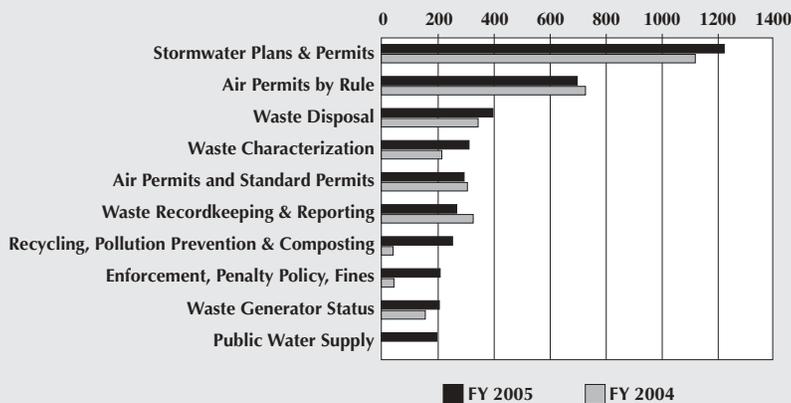
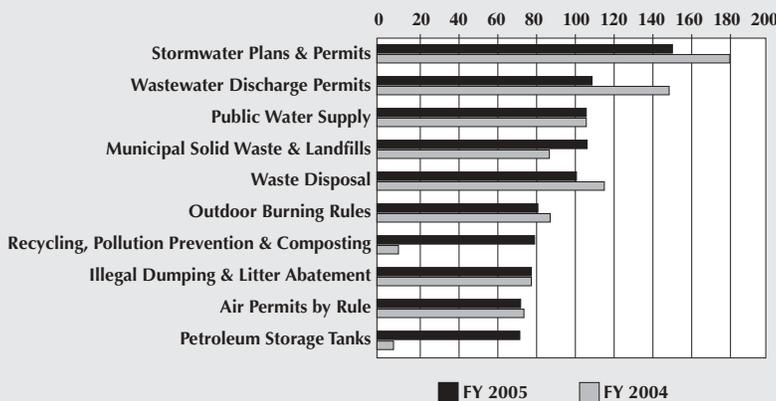


Figure 2. Top Regulatory Issues for Local Governments (Statewide)



Workshop for Surface Coating Operations Offered in December

This December 13, 2005, join us for a workshop on coating basics, rule applicability, air emission calculations, best available control technology, and air dispersion modeling issues specific to coatings facilities. Hear from TCEQ technical experts in coatings permitting, air dispersion modeling, and toxicology.

This workshop is designed for engineers, business owners, consultants, and facility environmental managers and staff with operations in Texas. Professional engineers can earn four hours of continuing education credit by attending this workshop. Call 512/239-6327 to learn more. ■

Go Electronic and Get Your Storm Water Permit Number Instantly

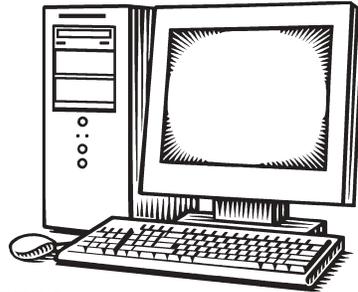
Do you need a storm water permit? If you are in the construction, auto salvage, metal finishers, or concrete business, or many other types of manufacturing businesses, you might need one.

You can expedite the processing of your storm water permit application (Notice of Intent), your No Exposure Certification, or your Notice of Termination by submitting them electronically. To do so, you need to complete a STEERS Participation Agreement and mail it to the TCEQ. Your password and ID will be e-mailed to you within 10 days.

What are the benefits to you?

- You permit coverage begins 24 hours after you submit the on-line form.
- You get instant confirmation that your notice was received by TCEQ.

Don't wait! To get access, go to the STEERS Web page (www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/steers/steers.html) to download a copy of the STEERS Participation Agreement and mail it in today. ■



E-Mail Option Offered to Advocate Subscribers

You are currently on our subscription list to receive a free copy of *The Advocate*, an update on rules of interest to small businesses and local governments.

Instead of receiving the paper copy in the mail, you now have the option of receiving an e-mail from us letting you know when the latest issue of *The Advocate* is available to view on the Web at www.sblga.info by clicking on Compliance Help for Small Businesses or Local Governments and scrolling down to its listing.

If you would prefer the e-mail alert *instead of* the printed copy, please e-mail us at sbap@tceq.state.tx.us. Be sure to let us know:

- your name;
- your company name or, if you are with a local government, your jurisdiction; and
- the e-mail address where you would prefer us to send it.

Thank you for your interest in *The Advocate*! ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2005

12th, Surface Coating Workshop, Houston
13th-15th Air Permitting Seminar, Houston
15th, Underground Storage Tank (UST) Seminar, Austin

February 2006

Emissions Inventory Seminar, DFW—date to be announced

May 2006

9th-11th, Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, Austin
10th, Texas Environmental Excellence Awards, Austin
23rd, Hazardous Waste Workshop, San Marcos

Call 512/239-3150 or email educate@tceq.state.tx.us for more information on all these events!

Local Specialists are Ready to Help You!

You have free, confidential help right in your back yard.

Region 1 - Amarillo

Ross Muir 806/468-0505

Region 2 - Lubbock

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Region 3 - Abilene

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The Advocate

The Advocate is published quarterly by the Small Business and Local Government Assistance (SBLGA) Program of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

YOU CAN CALL ON US

Get free, confidential help with questions on air, water, waste, or pollution prevention issues from this special section of the TCEQ.

SBLGA works for you by:

- providing local environmental assistance when and where it's needed;
- giving small business and local government a voice in TCEQ rule and policy making; and
- communicating technical information in plain language.

SBLGA is entirely separate from TCEQ's enforcement program.

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E-Mail Option Offered to Advocate Subscribers

Toll Free and Confidential
1-800-447-2827

On the Web at:
www.sblga.info



The TCEQ is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. The agency does not allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or veteran status. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document may be requested in alternate formats by contacting the TCEQ at 512/239-0028, Fax 512/239-4488 or 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD), or by writing P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087.

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