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So You Want to Start a Business . . . What Ohio EPA Needs to Help Get You Pointed in the Right Direction

The thought of starting a new business can be both exciting and overwhelming. As you develop your business plan, knowing who you need to talk to and what information they may be looking for is sometimes a guessing game.

At the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), we receive calls every day from people interested in starting a business. When we do get calls, we ask questions to help you understand what possible Ohio EPA permits might be needed to start a business. Because we have programs that cover so many areas, from the source of your drinking water to disposing of your wastes, there can be a lot of questions to ask.

This fact sheet includes the common questions we ask and, more important, why we ask. Depending on the nature of your business, we may not cover all of these areas or may have additional questions. The questions we do ask, though, are intended to help get you started on the right foot, with the proper permits and in compliance.

What We Need Need to Know:	Why:
General Description of Business	
What type of business do you want to start?	Knowing the business type helps determine what permits you may need.
When do you plan to start construction and begin operating the business?	To give you an idea of typical time frames for getting Ohio EPA permits, so you know how far in advance you should begin submitting permit applications.
Where will your business be located?	To get you contact information for your Ohio EPA district office or local air agency (for air permitting in some areas of the state). These offices are responsible for reviewing permit applications.
Wetlands/Stormwater Construction Permits	
Will site construction activities disturb one or more acres of land?	For construction activities disturbing one or more acres, you need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water.
Are there wetlands, lakes or streams where you want to locate your business? Will you be conducting activities that involve excavating or placing fill material in a wetland, stream or lake, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stream piping, rerouting, straightening; • channelization; • dredging a wetlands to create a pond; • dredging or placing fill into waters of the state? 	For projects that would physically impact waters of the state, including wetlands, streams and lakes, you need a Section 401 certification from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water and a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or State of Ohio Isolated Wetland Permit.

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What We Need Need to Know:	Why:
Sewage Treatment, Wastewater Management and Industrial Activity Storm Water	
<p>Will your business be in an area with access to city sewer for wastewater discharges?</p> <p>Will you connect to an existing sewer (install a line, force main, pump station)?</p> <p>Have you talked with the local wastewater treatment plant* about your proposed operations?</p> <p>* A municipal wastewater plant is also called a publicly owned treatment works, or POTW</p>	<p>For sanitary sewer extension projects (constructing sewers, force mains, pump stations, etc.), you need a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water prior to construction.</p> <p>You may need to get permission from the local POTW to discharge to them. You may also need a discharge permit from the POTW or from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water.</p> <p>Depending on the contaminants in your wastewater discharge, you may need to treat it before discharging it to the POTW. You need a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water to construct a wastewater treatment system.</p>
<p>Will your business be located in an area that does not have sewers? If so, will you need to construct an on-site sewage treatment system (for example, septic system, mound system, package plant) or process wastewater treatment system?</p> <p>Have you contacted the Division of Surface Water in your local Ohio EPA district office to talk about your proposed location?</p>	<p>You need a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water to construct a sewage or wastewater treatment, disposal, recycling, storage or collection system (including holding tanks).</p> <p>There are many factors that go into siting an on-site sewage or wastewater treatment system and it's important to know this to ensure that the site will be adequate and that Ohio EPA can approve the installation of an on-site system. Some of these factors include property size, soil type, depth to bedrock, location of wells, access to receiving streams and access to existing sanitary sewers. There are also strict limitations on the use of holding tanks for sewage.</p>
<p>Do you plan to expand or modify an existing sewage or wastewater treatment system (for example, expand or modify a septic tank/leach field)?</p>	<p>You need a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water to expand or otherwise modify an existing sewage or wastewater treatment facility.</p>
<p>Do you plan to discharge any process-related wastewater to an on-site septic system?</p>	<p>Some discharge activities are <u>completely prohibited</u>. For authorized activities, you must submit an inventory form and may need an underground injection control (UIC) permit from Ohio EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters.</p>
<p>Will your business discharge wastewater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly to waters of the state (for example stream, river or lake); or • to a ditch or storm sewer (also referred to as a conveyance system) that leads to a waterway? 	<p>You need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water for this discharge.</p>
<p>Do you know your SIC/NAICS code(s) for the business? Are you familiar with the industrial storm water permit requirements?</p> <p>If you do not know what SIC/NAICS codes apply to your business, you can find a search engine for these codes through the U.S. Department of Labor's Web site at www.osha.gov/oshstats/naics-manual.html.</p>	<p>Facilities with certain SIC codes and other operations where there is a potential for storm water contamination from outdoor material handling or storage (for example, scrap metal yards and auto recyclers) need an industrial storm water permit from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water.</p> <p>The industrial storm water permit is separate from the storm water permit which may be required during construction activities (see previous section).</p>

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What We Need Need to Know:	Why:
Drinking Water Supply	
<p>Will you get your drinking water from a municipal supply or will you need to construct an on-site well?</p> <p>If you plan to construct an on-site well system, how many people will the system provide water to (including employees and customers)?</p>	<p>This helps determine if your on-site system meets Ohio EPA's definition of a public water system. If so, you are required to submit detailed plans to Ohio EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters for approval before installing the well system. You must also get a license to operate the system from Ohio EPA and monitor water regularly for contaminants.</p>
Air Emissions	
<p>What types of equipment will you be operating (for example, process or material handling equipment)?</p> <p>Do you expect air emissions (dust, fumes, vapors, etc.) from your business?</p>	<p>If your business will release air emissions, you may need air permits from Ohio EPA's Division of Air Pollution Control.</p>
<p>Do you plan to have any buildings on the property demolished or renovated?</p>	<p>You are required to notify Ohio EPA's Division of Air Pollution Control (or local air agency) of your demolition activities. Notification is required for all facility demolition projects, even if no asbestos is present. Some renovation activities also require notification. You may also generate construction/demolition debris which must be properly managed.</p>
Waste Management	
<p>What wastes will your business generate?</p> <p>Will you generate any hazardous waste?</p>	<p>You may be classified as a hazardous waste generator. Generators can store their hazardous waste on-site for limited periods of time without a permit. You may need to notify Ohio EPA's Division of Hazardous Waste Management of your hazardous waste activity and get an identification number. If you plan to store, treat or dispose of hazardous waste, you may need a permit.</p>
<p>Will you be handling materials such as scrap tires, composting waste, infectious waste or construction/demolition debris?</p>	<p>Ohio EPA has specific requirements related to each of these areas.</p>

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What We Need Need to Know:	Why:
Environmental Considerations and Property Transfer	
<p>Do you plan to take over an existing business or site where a business was previously located? If so, what type of business operation(s) were at the site previously?</p> <p>Do you know of any environmental due diligence or property assessment work that's been done at the site to determine if there are past or present environmental issues?*</p> <p>* Ohio EPA does not conduct property assessments for potential owners.</p>	<p>If you have access to due diligence or property assessment reports, this information can be helpful to you in understanding the site history and potential environmental liability.</p> <p>Although Ohio EPA does not conduct property assessments, we may have other information on-file about the property, particularly if another business was in operation at the site. We can explain our procedures for getting file information.</p> <p>Information about the site is also helpful to us in pointing you to other resources, such as potential assistance under Ohio's Voluntary Action Program (voluntary clean up program).</p> <p>Knowing about the site is also helpful in determining if an existing on-site sewage or wastewater treatment system can be used for your new business. (See previous section on sewage treatment and wastewater management.)</p>
Pre-Application Meeting	
<p>Do you have process/flow diagrams and other technical information related to your operations available (such as equipment specifications, Material Safety Data Sheets for raw materials, expected through put rates, etc.)?</p>	<p>This helps determine if you are ready for a pre-application meeting. The pre-application meeting is a more in-depth technical discussion about your processes and permitting.</p>

Additional Resources

Ohio EPA's Guide to Environmental Permitting
www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/sb/publications/permitguide.pdf

Ohio EPA's Online Permit Wizard
A Web-based permitting tutorial designed to help you identify the various permit, license and registration requirements that may apply to your business. Using answers to a series of questions, the Permit Wizard creates a customized summary of information to help you get started on the right track with the proper permits. Available at <http://epawebapps.epa.state.oh.us/PermitWizard/jsp/index.jsp>.

Need More Help?

If you're thinking about starting a new business and are looking for a starting point within Ohio EPA, contact our Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP). OCAPP's goal is to help business owners

understand their compliance responsibilities. The office serves as a one-stop shop and can help you get started by gathering together helpful resources from Ohio EPA's various divisions. Contact OCAPP directly at (800) 329-7518 or visit www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/ocapp.html.

When you have more detailed information about your process (for example, process flow diagrams, equipment specifications, materials/chemicals that will be used, Material Safety Data sheets, etc.), you could benefit from a pre-application meeting with your local Ohio EPA district office, particularly if your business will require several permits. A pre-application meeting is a good opportunity to discuss the scope of the project and identify the technical information that will be needed as part of the permit application process. This also provides you with an opportunity to discuss the permit review process and convey any important time considerations related to your proposed construction schedule. Not every new business needs a pre-application meeting. Contact OCAPP or your local district office (www.epa.state.oh.us/newdirections.html) to determine if a pre-application meeting is appropriate.