

What is the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program?

SB-002 2019

Wisconsin's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) is a free service from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that was created to help any small business in Wisconsin, employing 100 or fewer employees, to understand their environmental compliance responsibilities for both state and federal rules. The SBEAP's services are available to small businesses such as industrial facilities (manufacturing, printing, painting and coating), commercial properties (gas stations, dry cleaners, multifamily rental/residential properties, collision repair shops), health care facilities, hospitality industry (hotels, campgrounds, taverns), schools and churches. Environmental responsibilities can include: air pollution permitting, wastewater discharge permitting, managing storm water during construction or while operating an industrial process, properly managing recyclables and solid and hazardous wastes, maintaining public drinking water systems, among others. The SBEAP includes three main elements— a technical assistance program, an advisory council, and a small business ombudsman— which are described in more detail below.

Technical Assistance Program

Technical assistance staff review both state (DNR) and federal (US Environmental Protection Agency or EPA) rules and work with the regulators to understand what is required for small businesses to comply. Staff then use what they learn to create "plain language" publications, answer compliance questions, respond to regulatory inquiries, coordinate workshops, as well as direct businesses to other pertinent technical assistance providers.

The SBEAP reaches thousands of businesses each year through meetings, presentations, workshops, an electronic newsletter, and publications posted on the DNR web site. Publications currently offered include: fact sheets, rule summaries, worksheets, record keeping and reporting forms, compliance calendars, and other tools designed to make environmental compliance easier for Wisconsin businesses. The program's web site is found here: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/>.

To access DNR's Technical Assistance services:

- Call the toll free hotline at 1-855-889-3021
- Send an email to DNRSMBusiness@wisconsin.gov
- Read past editions and subscribe to the Small Business Advisor e-newsletter: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/Advisor.html>

Small Business Environmental Council

Wisconsin's Small Business Environmental Council (SBEC) serves as an advisory panel for the DNR and is directly staffed by the SBEAP. The Council's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Advising the DNR on the effectiveness of the small business assistance program, difficulties encountered by small businesses when complying with environmental regulations, enforcement of the rules against small businesses, and how to best help small businesses comply.
- ◆ Reviewing information for small businesses about rules and regulations to ensure the information is clear and understandable.
- ◆ Reviewing proposed rules and rule changes to identify potential impacts on small businesses and providing recommendations on minimizing those impacts.

The SBEC helps the DNR understand both the needs of small businesses and how to communicate and interact effectively with the small business community.

The SBEC has eight members who represent small business, the public, and the DNR. Council members are appointed for three-year terms by the governor, the president of the state senate, the speaker of the assembly, the senate minority leader, the assembly minority leader, and the secretary of DNR.

For more information about the SBEC and its members:

- Visit the SBEC web page at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/Council.html>
- Call the small business hotline at 855-889-3021 or email DNRSMB@wisconsin.gov

Small Business Ombudsman

The Small Business Ombudsman is the third component of Wisconsin's SBEAP. The Ombudsman has responsibilities in three important areas:

- ◆ Communication—serves as a liaison, connecting small businesses with both DNR staff and the information they need
- ◆ Advocacy—serves as an advocate for small businesses by providing recommendations on their behalf and facilitating resolution of disputes
- ◆ Compliance assistance—provides compliance assistance to small businesses and makes recommendations on regulations that affect small business

For more information on the Ombudsman, call the small business hotline at 855-889-3021 or email DNRSMB@wisconsin.gov.

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**SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
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