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Ohio EPA Goes Live With New eDocument Management System

In an effort to simplify record-keeping while creating easy public access to Ohio EPA documents, the Agency is implementing a new system to manage electronic documents more effectively and efficiently, serving as Ohio EPA's "virtual filing cabinet."

Ohio EPA Director Scott Nally said, "The opportunity to provide quick, free access to Ohio EPA's documents is a small but important milestone in our effort to make all records easily accessible to the public. Not only will this make our process even more accountable and transparent to the public, it will help maximize our organization's limited resources. Ohio EPA will also save on the cost of paper, filing, records storage, and labor costs associated with searching for and copying public records."

The first stage of the eDocument Management system - available now - contains all noncompliance documents issued since Jan. 1, 2007. These documents include: any Agency letter citing violations of authorizing actions; any Agency letter documenting a corrected violation that was sent to the violator; unilateral and consensual director's findings and orders resolving a violation; and Attorney General's orders on behalf of Ohio EPA. To search for documents, visit: <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/edoc.aspx>.

The initial launch is the first of many phases of electronics records posting to be undertaken over several years with the goal of ultimately having nearly all Ohio EPA public records online for public and internal viewing.

The benefits of electronic document management include:

- saving thousands of dollars annually on paper, paper filing systems and storage;
- increasing security levels on documents – improving the ability to ensure documents are not misfiled, inadvertently destroyed or stolen;
- granting citizens and other interested parties instant access to documents they are seeking online, and reducing – and eventually eliminating – the need to charge customers for copies of public records;
- saving costs for labor when collecting and copying documents for public records requests and attorney reviews, and money spent on records transportation and storage (up to 30 percent of Ohio EPA's rented square footage is devoted to storing records); and
- helping Ohio EPA comply with public records legal requirements.

To learn how to use the virtual file cabinet at Ohio EPA, visit: <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/edoc.aspx>.