

Want to start a new business? Ohio EPA Can Help Point You in the Right Direction

The thought of starting a new business can be both exciting and overwhelming. As you develop your business plan, trying to figure out 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. During these calls, we ask questions to help understand what Ohio EPA permits might be needed to start your 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 importantly, why we ask. Depending on the nature of your business, we may not cover all 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.



Additional Resources

Ohio EPA's Guide to Environmental Permitting in Ohio: epa.ohio.gov/Portals/41/sb/publications/permitguide.pdf.

Ohio EPA's Online Permit Wizard

This is a web-based permitting tutorial designed to help you identify the various permit, license, and registration requirements that may apply to your business. Using the answers you provide 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. This is available at <http://epawebapps.epa.state.oh.us/PermitWizard/jsp/index.jsp>.

The 1st Stop Business Connection

This program is operated by the Ohio Development Services Agency and the U.S. Small Business Administration. It provides free state-level information needed to start your business. You will be guided through six simple steps to create a business information kit that you can immediately download. Your kit will contain basic information that all business must know, along with state-level regulations and forms specific to your business. It's important to understand that you will still need to check the federal and local regulations before starting your business. After you complete your kit, you can click on the links to state and federal agencies that every business comes in contact with. This is available at business.ohio.gov/starting/.

Need More Help?

If you're thinking about starting a new business and you're 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 helpful resources from Ohio EPA's various divisions. Contact OCAPP directly at (800) 329-7518, or visit epa.ohio.gov/ocapp.

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 (see contact information on page 6) to determine if a pre-application meeting is appropriate.

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What We Need to Know	Why
General Description of Business	
What type of business do you want to start?	Knowing the type of business helps determine what permits you may need.
When do you plan to start construction and begin operating the business?	Knowing the typical time frame for obtaining Ohio EPA permits helps you know how far in advance you should begin submitting permit applications.
Where will your business be located?	Knowing the contact information for your Ohio EPA district office or local air agency (for air permitting in some areas of the state) is important so you know the office responsible for reviewing your permit applications and who to contact for any questions you may have.
Wetlands and Storm Water Construction Permits	
Will construction activities on your site disturb one (1) or more acres of land?	For construction activities disturbing one (1) or more acres, you need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any wetlands, lakes, or streams in the area 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 rerouting, straightening, piping, or channelization; • filling in a wetland to construct some type of building; • dredging a wetland to create a pond; • dredging or placing fill material into any waters of the state? 	For proposed projects that would physically impact waters of the state (which includes wetlands, streams, lakes, and any body of water) 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 prior to construction. If you are proposing to impact an isolated wetland, you need a State of Ohio Isolated Wetland Permit.
Sewage Treatment, Wastewater Management and Industrial Storm Water	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will your business be in an area with access to city sewer for wastewater discharges? • Will you connect to an existing sewer (install a line, force main, pump station)? • Have you talked with the local wastewater treatment plant* about your proposed operations? <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 before construction.</p> <p>You may need to get permission from the local POTW to discharge your waste to it. 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, 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 pretreatment system.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will your business be located in an area that does not have sewers? If so, will you need to construct an onsite sewage treatment system (for example, septic system, mound system, package plant) or a process wastewater treatment system? Have you contacted the Division of Surface Water in your local Ohio EPA district office to talk about your proposed location? 	<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 onsite sewage or wastewater treatment system, and it's important to understand these factors to ensure the site will be adequate and that Ohio EPA can approve the installation of an onsite system in this area. 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>
Do you plan to expand or modify an existing sewage or wastewater treatment system (for example, expand or modify a septic tank or leach field)?	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 system.
Do you plan to discharge any process-related wastewater to an onsite septic system?	Some discharge activities are completely prohibited. 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.
Will your business discharge wastewater: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> directly to waters of the state (for example, a stream, river, or lake); or to a ditch or storm sewer (also referred to as a conveyance system) that leads to a waterway? 	You need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water for this discharge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know your SIC/NAICS code(s) for the business? Are you familiar with the industrial storm water permit requirements? 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 website at www.osha.gov/oshstats/naics-manual.html. 	<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>
Drinking Water Supply	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you get your drinking water from a municipal supply or will you need to construct an onsite well? If you plan to construct an onsite well system, how many people will the system provide water to (including employees and customers)? 	This helps determine if your onsite 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.

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Air Emissions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What types of equipment will you be operating (for example, process or material handling equipment)? Do you expect air emissions (dust, fumes, vapors, etc.) from your business? 	If your business will release any type of air contaminants, you may need air permits from Ohio EPA's Division of Air Pollution Control (or local air agency).
Do you plan to have any buildings on the property demolished or renovated?	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 that must be properly managed.
Waste Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What wastes will your business generate? Will you generate any hazardous waste? 	You may be classified as a hazardous waste generator. Generators can store their hazardous waste onsite for limited periods of time without a permit. You may need to notify Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization 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.
Will you be handling materials such as scrap tires, composting waste, infectious waste, or construction/demolition debris?	Ohio EPA's Division of Materials and Waste Management has specific requirements related to each of these areas.
Pre-Application Meeting	
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 throughput rates, etc.)?	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.
Environmental Considerations and Property Transfer	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 previously at the site? 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>* 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 help you understand the history of the site 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. There is a specific procedure for requesting file information, which we can help you with.</p> <p>Knowing the history of the site is also helpful for us so we can provide you with additional resources, such as potential assistance under Ohio's Voluntary Action Program (a voluntary clean-up program).</p> <p>Historical information also helps us determine if an existing onsite sewage or wastewater treatment system can be used for your new business. (See previous section on sewage treatment and wastewater management)</p>

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Central Office

Lazarus Government Center
50 W. Town St., Suite 700
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 644-3020

Central District Office

Lazarus Government Center
50 W. Town St., Suite 700
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 728-3778
(800) 686-2330

Northwest District Office

347 N. Dunbridge Rd.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(419) 352-8461
(800) 686-6930

Southeast District Office

2195 E. Front Street
Logan, OH 43138
(740) 385-8501
(800) 686-7330

Northeast District Office

2110 E. Aurora Rd.
Twinsburg, OH 44087
(330) 963-1200
(800) 686-6330

Southwest District Office

401 E. Fifth St.
Dayton, OH 45402
(937) 285-6357
(800) 686-8930

*Toll-free numbers are for citizens with questions or concerns about environmental issues.
The regulated community should use the business line for routine business.
Spills and emergencies should be reported to (800) 282-9378.*