



Citizen Involvement in Pollution Control in Oklahoma

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There are many ways you can help reduce soil, air, and water pollution. Your local Cooperative Extension Service office offers materials about environmental protection considerations for homeowners, farmers, and ranchers. You can also assist Oklahoma's environmental regulatory agencies in the reduction of pollution. Oklahoma law provides a means for you to report environmental problems or suspected pollution violations.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to describe how you can help reduce environmental pollution by reporting suspected pollution problems to the Oklahoma Department of Pollution Control Citizen Hotline.

What is the Oklahoma Department of Pollution Control?

The Department of Pollution Control coordinates the pollution control activities of state agencies with environmental protection responsibilities (Department of Agriculture, Conservation Commission, Corporation Commission, Department of Health, Department of Mines, Water Resources Board, and Department of Wildlife Conservation). The Department of Pollution Control maintains a repository for all agency rules and regulations pertaining to environmental pollution prevention, control, and abatement. Making sure the public is informed and aware of environmental management and quality issues is another responsibility of the Department of Pollution Control.

The Department also maintains a Citizen Complaint System whereby individuals can report concerns about suspected violations of the state pollution laws. All reports of pollution violations are referred to the appropriate agency for investigation, and the Department of Pollution Control monitors the action taken on each violation.

How the Citizen Complaint System Works

Through the Citizen Complaint System, you can contact the Department of Pollution Control if you are concerned about possible pollution problems. The Citizen Complaint System is structured to insure that each concern or complaint is addressed.

If you have a complaint or concern about a pollution problem, you can call the Department's 24-hour, toll free number: 1-800-522-0206.

What Happens when You Call the Citizen Complaint Hotline?

Your call is received by a Department of Pollution Control staff member, who initiates a response to your concern or complaint. After hours and on weekends and holidays, an answering service relays calls to staff members to ensure a quick response.

Your complaint is referred by the Department of Pollution Control to the agency with responsibility for that area of concern so an investigation can be started. Typically, you will receive a letter verifying that your complaint has been received and referred to the appropriate agency.

The Department of Pollution Control monitors the investigation by the response agency. When the investigation is completed, a report will be provided to you.

If you are dissatisfied or the Director of the Department of Pollution Control is dissatisfied with the results of the action taken on a complaint, the Director may place the complaint on the agenda of a Pollution Control Coordinating Board Meeting. The Pollution Control Coordinating Board may authorize: further investigations; further action of the agency with primary jurisdiction; a violation hearing; initiation of the appropriate action; or no further action.

When Should You use the Citizen Complaint Hotline?

Here are some examples of reasons why you might want to call the Citizen Complaint Hotline.

- You have observed discharges into the air, from an industrial or other source, which you believe violate Clean Air laws.
- You have discovered a partially exposed underground pipe that is leaking.
- You are concerned that a nearby manufacturing plant or agricultural operation is violating laws, which prohibit the discharge of materials into a stream or river.

- You detect a noxious odor or fumes and believe the smell is coming from a nearby industry.
- You suspect sewage leaking into a stream or lake.
- You see a large number of dead fish in a stream or lake.
- You discover that someone has been dumping trash in an empty lot or wooded area.
- You are concerned that nearby pesticide spraying may not be following state regulations.

- You find a contamination problem, or believe one may result, from oil field activities.

For more information on the Citizen Complaint System, you may write or call:

**Oklahoma Department of Pollution Control
P.O. Box 53504
N.E. 10th, Stonewall
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3504
(405)271-4468**

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