

Practical Guide to Environmental Management *for* Small Businesses



The *Practical Guide to Environmental Management for Small Businesses (Guide)*, produced by US EPA's Small Business Division, is a publication based on Environmental Management System (EMS) concepts that is designed to help small businesses organize their environmental management responsibilities in a productive and cost-effective way. The final version of the Guide has been strengthened by the suggestions of SBO/SBAP staff, small business owners, trade and industry organizations, and EMS experts within State environmental agencies and EPA. The Guide has been dubbed "the on-ramp to EMS for small businesses," and lauded for its pragmatic, step-by-step approach.

The *Guide* is written in plain, straightforward language, free of jargon, so that readers can benefit whether or not they know about environmental regulations or good practices of environmental management. It leads the small business person through the steps to put in place a functional, yet efficient, environmental management program. It allows small business personnel to proceed at their own pace and see immediate results. If they choose to follow *Guide* recommendations from beginning to end, they will find that they have developed all of the elements necessary to put in place a fully functional EMS.

The EPA's Small Business Division recently released a new publication, *Documenting Your Environmental Management Plan - A Workbook for Small Businesses (Workbook)*, which goes hand in hand with The Guide. The goal of this multi-faceted approach is to make multiple tools and avenues of assistance available to small business owner who want to make their business' environmental performance better and less costly.

The six sections of the *Guide* build on each other in a logical way:

- Section I explains that the Guide is about getting environmental efforts organized so staff can use their valuable time effectively, and the small business can save money, be efficient, and look good to customers and the community.
- Section II is about basics: how a business may affect the environment, what environmental rules may apply, and how to deal with practical matters like being prepared for spills and keeping records.
- Section III shows ways to save money by using less energy, conserving water, and reducing waste; and how to do a simple cost-benefit analysis.
- Section IV is about organizing environmental management efforts so that they will be easier. It gives ideas for getting employees more involved, streamlining who does what, and measuring progress.
- Section V explains how to show off environmental efforts to customers and the community and build outside relationships to further improve the small business' environmental performance.
- Section VI explains what an Environmental Management System (EMS) is and why a small business person may want to have one, and how the previous Guide sections fit into an EMS.

If you would like to obtain additional copies of the Guide, or if you need contact information for the State Small Business Assistance Program in your area, call the EPA Small Business Division at 800-368-5888.