

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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- ***A Guide to Developing an Environmental Management System for Small Business***, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, GI-304, August 2003.
- ***A Model Environmental Management System for a Small Business: Metal Finisher***, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, GI-304a, August 2003.

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# Introduction

This publication is intended for small business owners or employees of metal finishing facilities who have decided to do an environmental management system (EMS) for their facility or company. It is made up of two parts:

- Part I: Steps of an Environmental Management System gives an overview of the 13 steps of an EMS and includes examples you can use to start creating your own EMS.
- Part II: Sample Manual and Blank Forms includes an EMS manual for a hypothetical metal finishing facility and blank forms you can use to begin the development of your own EMS Manual. The sample manual describes an EMS that is based on the elements of the ISO 14001 standard and incorporates EPA's National Environmental Performance Track (Performance Track) emphasis on compliance, pollution prevention, and communication with your community. Your choice whether or not to build an EMS that could be certified in the future will depend on your goals and needs.

## What is an Environmental Management System (EMS)?

An EMS can help your facility handle matters related to water, air, and land. Developing and carrying out an EMS is voluntary, and it reduces your facility's risk and liability, increases efficiency in using environmental resources, and helps your facility comply with environmental rules. An EMS improves performance by helping your facility:

- Reduce costs;
- Prioritize environmental issues;
- Identify potential problems;
- Improve environmental compliance;
- Use materials more efficiently;
- Streamline operations;
- Improve internal communication; and
- Enhance employee morale.

An EMS can also make your facility eligible for state and/or federal regulatory incentives. See [www.epa.gov/performance-track](http://www.epa.gov/performance-track) or contact your state agency for more information.

## How to Use this EMS Guide

To get started, read Part I of this publication to learn about the 13 steps of an EMS and review recommendations for how your facility should create each step. Part I has the following format:

- What (describes what the step is);
- Who (identifies the person or people in charge of the step);
- Why (explains the importance of each step); and
- How (shows how to create each step).

Next, read Part II of this document, which will help you create your own EMS Manual by providing a sample EMS Manual for a hypothetical facility as well as blank forms you can use to get started. Be sure that your facility's company policies and the most recent federal, state, and local requirements are incorporated into your EMS Manual.

As you plan your EMS, keep the following things in mind:

- Focus on results. Your EMS should reduce risk and help your facility ensure total compliance, while continuously improving your environmental performance.
- Plan for flexibility. Design your EMS so it will continue to be used and adapted instead of collecting dust. Your EMS should change and improve with your business.
- Pick an appropriate level of detail. In general, the larger the facility, the more detailed its EMS procedures tend to be.
- Incorporate your existing systems. If you already have a system for documentation, for example, it may make sense to develop your EMS Manual to incorporate that system.
- Start small. Don't take on the world.

This publication is based on documents from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and U.S. EPA.

## The Terms We Use

**CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations

**Cross-Functional Team (CFT):** The CFT is made up of members of each major operation within your facility who represent their area or department in several facets of the EMS and serve as an information resource.

**Environmental Aspect:** An element of your facility's activities, products, or services that can or does have an impact on the environment.

**Environmental Impact:** Any change to the environment, whether good or bad, resulting from your facility's activities, products, or services.

**Environmental Management Representative (EMR):** A member of your facility's top management who: identifies all EMS tasks and makes sure they are completed on time; reports periodically to the management group; and demonstrates top management's commitment to the EMS.

**Environmental Policy:** Your facility's statement of its main environmental commitments.

**ISO 14001:** A standard set by the International Organization for Standardization that is primarily concerned with "environmental management."

**Significant Environmental Aspect (SEA):** An environmental aspect that has, or potentially has a significant impact on the environment.

**Nonconformity:** A discrepancy between your facility's actual EMS activity and a related procedure in your EMS Manual.

## Where to Find More EMS Information

If you have questions about EMS, there are many sources of information available to you. You can get information in the following ways:

### On the Web:

- Visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) for information about environmental regulations, tools, and compliance guidance. Information specifically about EMS can be found at [www.epa.gov/ems/](http://www.epa.gov/ems/).
- Visit EPA's compliance assistance Web site at [www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/assistance/sectors/chemicalpub.html](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/assistance/sectors/chemicalpub.html) for a list of EPA compliance tools.
- Download EPA's list of environmental assistance providers for small businesses, "A Resource Directory of Small Business Environmental Assistance Providers" [EPA-233-B-02-001] March 2002, 85 pp., from <http://www.epa.gov/sbo/pubs.htm>.
- Visit the U.S. Small Business Administration at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for information about services available to small businesses.

### By phone:

- Contact EPA's Small Business Ombudsman at (800) 368-5888 with questions about regulations and guidance, research, case studies, or for contacts for more information.