

Protecting the Environment and Our Employees

2004 Performance Highlights

EPA Office of Administration and Resources Management



In keeping with its mission to protect human health and the environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) strives to serve as a model of environmental stewardship and to promote employee wellness at its offices and laboratories. This report summarizes the Agency's accomplishments in these areas for calendar year 2004.



Over the course of the year, EPA made significant strides in reducing its environmental footprint by embracing the following activities:

- Affirming its commitment to environmental management systems;
- Reducing energy and water use;
- Fostering the use of renewable energy;
- Delivering buildings with sustainable features; and
- Advancing an electronics recycling program.

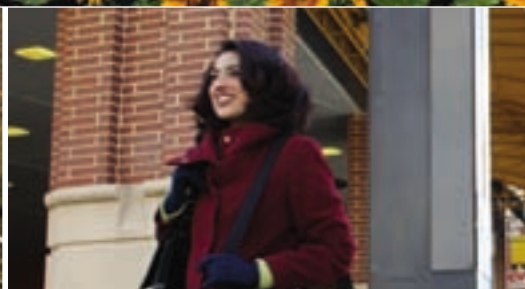
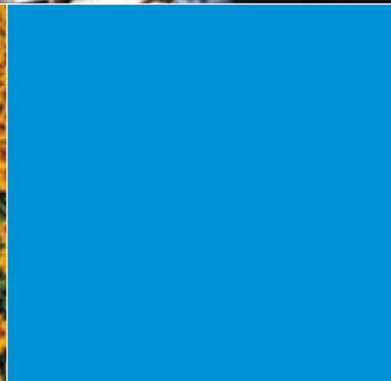


The report also highlights some of EPA's achievements in the area of employee health and safety. For example, EPA has piloted a national wellness program and is sponsoring training on how to safely tow boats and other field equipment.

We are proud of the progress that was made in 2004 to reduce the environmental impact of our operations and to protect our employees, and we are committed to improving upon our performance in these areas in the years to come.

Luis A. Luna
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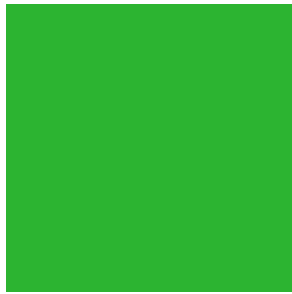
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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

EMS KEEPS EPA ON TRACK FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

An environmental management system (EMS) is a systematic approach to examining and reducing an organization's environmental footprint. Executive Order 13148 requires federal agencies to establish an EMS at appropriate facilities by December 31, 2005. EPA's role is to be a model among federal agencies, not only in our compliance with executive orders and environmental regulations, but in developing and implementing EMSs as an Agencywide approach to optimizing environmental performance as an integral part of how the Agency executes its mission. Our EMS objectives encompass the following:

- Ensuring environmental compliance by meeting or exceeding all applicable requirements.
- Striving to continuously improve our performance in terms of both regulated and unregulated environmental impacts.
- Reducing waste at the source and applying other pollution prevention approaches whenever practicable.
- Considering environmental factors when making purchasing and operating decisions.
- Establishing, tracking, and reviewing specific environmental performance goals.
- Sharing information on environmental performance, EMS development, and EMS implementation with the public.



Managers of EPA locations are responsible for their individual EMS planning and implementation. During the internal facility selection process, EPA cast a wide net, identifying 34 offices and laboratories as official reporting locations. There are 12 major EMS milestones that all 34 Agency reporting locations must meet, including an external review, which—upon successful completion—allows a location to self-declare EMS implementation. To accomplish this task, each location has identified an EMS coordinator and implementation team, which: undertakes baseline research to identify its environmental footprint; establishes environmental management objectives and targets; develops and documents procedures and programs to reach those targets; promotes EMS awareness to all employees; and conducts internal audits and documentation reviews to help the sites complete the self-declaration process. Currently, the Agency is focusing on making sure all EMS elements are in place, but after 2005 the focus will shift to utilizing EMS as an integral tool to help EPA optimize its environmental performance.

EPA is one of the top agencies leading the implementation of EMS. All 34 EPA EMS reporting locations are on track to meet the December 2005 deadline. Four EPA locations have already completed the self-declaration process: the Region 3 Office in Philadelphia (December 2003); the Region 9 Office in San Francisco (September 2004); the Region 1 Office in Boston (November 2004); and the Region 10 Laboratory in Manchester, Washington (January 2005). The Agency's Environmental Science Center in Fort Meade, Maryland, received ISO 14001 certification in 2002, and the Region 3 Office received its ISO 14001 certification at the beginning of 2005.

A key component of managing and reducing EPA's adverse environmental impact is examining the Agency's natural resource use, including energy, water, and raw materials that are consumed. The Agency's strategy for conserving natural resources includes two major efforts: 1) reducing consumption to the extent possible; and 2) offsetting the environmental impact of consumption by purchasing environmentally preferable alternatives wherever possible. The Agency will focus on these two areas as it sets Agencywide EMS objectives and targets.

Laboratory Applies Management System to Reduce Impacts

The constantly changing demands of laboratory research work involve a steady stream of physical modifications to laboratory facilities, including plumbing, electrical lines, and other laboratory fixtures. To improve its renovation process and ensure that building modifications receive necessary environmental, safety, and health review, EPA's National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory (NVFEL) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, introduced a new facility modification request system in FY 2004.

Prior to introducing the new system, NVFEL had experienced difficulties with its older, less formal modification request process. With no well-defined pipeline through which all requests would pass, the Facilities Services Group might receive contradictory requests from different user groups sharing a single laboratory. Verbal requests were more likely to be forgotten or poorly planned, modifications were not necessarily reviewed to identify potential environmental, safety, and health issues, and researchers sometimes requested laboratory modifications without first getting management buy-in and ensuring adequate funding was available to complete the renovation work. From an environmental, safety, and health perspective, NVFEL realized it needed to assess the potential impact the modification could have on mission continuity and other facility occupants.

By instituting a formal modification request, review, and approval chain, NVFEL has resolved all of these issues. Under the new system, research groups fill in a form detailing the modification requested, including projected costs, which must be reviewed and approved by a manager. The Facilities Services Group then reviews the modification request and passes it to the laboratory's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program (SHEMP) managers for a parallel review. SHEMP personnel review the work requested to assess any potential adverse environmental, safety, and health impacts generated by the modification. Once the modification is approved by the Facilities Services Group and SHEMP personnel, the Facilities Services Group verifies the cost and funding availability and makes sure the work is completed in accordance with plans and specifications. By following this process, the Facilities Services Group is able to ensure adequate financing exists for each project, projects are well planned, and the environment, safety, and/or health of the laboratory, its staff, and visitors are protected.



AUDITS ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL, SAFETY, AND HEALTH MISSION

EPA's Environmental, Safety, and Health Management Audit Program is a systematic, documented, and objective review of Agency facilities, practices, and activities designed to assess management systems and verify compliance with regulations, standards, and executive orders. EPA has conducted these audits since 1988 to improve environmental performance, ensure compliance, and complement regulatory agency inspections and federal, state, and local oversight. The audit program is currently being realigned to be consistent with EMS integration. As part of EMS utilization, the audit program will help improve environmental performance.

EPA's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Division (SHEMD) provides a team of professionals to audit each EPA laboratory every three years and each office facility every five years. The audit program also supports the Agency's Underwater Diver Safety Program and Vessel Safety Program through regular reviews and technical support. The audits identify "findings," or compliance exceptions with regulations, standards, and executive orders, and verify that facilities have taken appropriate corrective action. Auditors also evaluate the processes and procedures established to identify hazards, manage risk, and minimize adverse environmental impacts. They also note pollution prevention and waste minimization efforts and monitor each site's EMS implementation efforts. Followup reviews and site support visits are scheduled where audits indicate that additional technical support is needed or complex corrective actions are required.

In FY 2004, audits were completed for eight EPA laboratories, one regional office, the EPA Headquarters facilities, and one research vessel. Auditors documented approximately 250 regulatory and Agency policy findings, but none of these was classified as a major regulatory infraction or immediate danger to employee health and safety. Eighty percent of findings were characterized as minor regulatory discrepancies that would most likely not result in a notice of violation or present a considerable risk to employees or the environment. The majority of audited facilities



have maintained or improved their performance when compared with their previous audit.

EPA RENEWS COMMITMENT TO ENERGY SAVINGS AND GREEN POWER

Energy use is one area in which EPA benefits from a two-pronged approach to environmental management. As a research-based federal agency, EPA operates more than 30 laboratories across the country. Laboratories are traditionally very energy-intensive facilities that demand a high volume of outside air requiring precise conditioning, i.e., heating, cooling, and humidification. Nevertheless, the Agency makes efficiency a top priority at its laboratories, combining the following approaches to energy management:

- Good design and oversight for new facilities, including variable air volume (VAV) fume hoods that reduce the need for constant air flow;
- Commissioning, re-commissioning, and retro-commissioning facilities that are not reaching their peak energy performance and/or performing in the way they were designed;
- Investing in mechanical systems improvements, which often pay for themselves rapidly in utility cost savings;
- Prioritizing efforts to focus on the largest and most energy-intensive facilities first; and
- Purchasing renewable or “green” power to offset the impacts associated with traditional electricity sources.

Although EPA’s overall energy use had been declining over the past few years, last year consumption rose somewhat from recent years’ energy use. During fiscal year (FY) 2004, about half of EPA laboratories’ energy consumption remained the same or increased from FY 2003. This is due in large part to several new facilities coming online. In 2004, EPA continued working on a multi-year commissioning effort to fully realize energy efficiencies in the new laboratory complex in Research Triangle Park (RTP), North Carolina, with the goal of reducing energy use at one of the Agency’s largest facilities by 10 to 15 percent by the end of 2005.

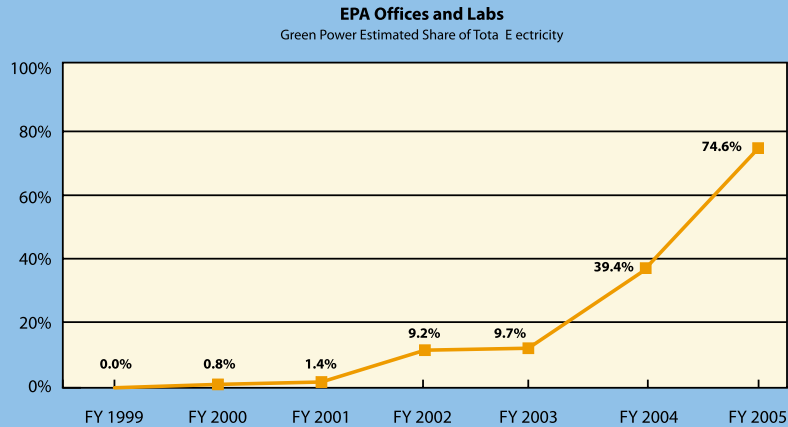


Because it takes time and investment to realize long-term energy savings at laboratories—and to offset the environmental impacts associated with its energy use—EPA has made a serious commitment to purchasing electricity from renewable sources wherever possible. In fact, by the end of 2004, EPA was under contract to purchase more than 221 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of renewable energy, or approximately 75 percent of the electricity used by all Agency offices and laboratories combined. Renewable energy can come in the form of green power purchased directly for electricity use, or in the form of renewable energy certificates (RECs), which support the development of renewable sources such as wind power, landfill gas, and other non-traditional energy generation.

In 2004, EPA contracted for its largest renewable power purchase to date—100 million kWh per year in RECs—for all of its RTP facilities. EPA also completed green power or REC purchases in 2004 for 100 percent of the electricity used in its laboratories or offices in the following locations: Athens, Georgia; Atlanta, Georgia; Duluth, Minnesota (90 percent of electricity); Grosse Ile, Michigan; Kansas City, Kansas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Denver, Colorado; and San Francisco, California. Green power contracts were also replaced or extended in Cincinnati, Ohio; Golden, Colorado; and EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. EPA's green power purchases are helping to support renewable energy generation, from wind farms in Pennsylvania and Minnesota to landfill gas facilities in Florida and California.

8 EPA even supports renewable energy generation in its own backyard. In 2004, the Agency completed installation of a state-of-the-art solar roof on its Western Ecology Division's main research facility in Corvallis, Oregon. The photovoltaic panels (pictured above) use the sun's light to provide up to 6 percent of the facility's electricity needs. This project joins a list of solar-powered street lights, awnings, and water heaters already being demonstrated by EPA facilities.

Green Power on the Rise



Water Savings Flow Beyond EPA Goals

EPA has set an internal goal to reduce water use at its laboratories by 10 percent by FY 2010, measured against a baseline of water use in FY 2000. To help accomplish this goal, the Agency has instituted a systematic approach to developing water management plans for each laboratory, including using best management practices such as water-efficient plumbing fixtures and eliminating inefficient mechanical practices such as single-pass cooling. By the end of 2004, EPA had completed and signed detailed water management plans for nearly 40 percent of its facilities.

In FY 2004, EPA used about 167.5 million gallons of water in its 29 reporting laboratories, a 10.6 percent reduction from the 187 million gallons used in FY 2000. Thanks to ongoing mechanical upgrades, installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, and other water conservation best practices, the Agency remains on track to meet its FY 2010 water reduction goal.



FACILITIES SHOWCASE GREEN BUILDING PRINCIPLES

EPA continues to demonstrate environmental stewardship in the most concrete way with its application of sustainable building principles in all aspects of facility siting, design, construction, renovation, and maintenance. Although EPA leases many of its facilities, the Agency works closely with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), building developers, architects, and engineers to ensure that energy efficiency, water conservation, recycling, stormwater issues, and other green building principles are addressed in every procurement. Several major construction projects were started in 2004 that provided an opportunity to put these principles into practice. When these projects are completed, EPA expects to have seven buildings certified through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) program.

The Agency's National Computer Center in RTP (pictured above), which includes a solar roof and numerous other sustainable features, achieved LEED Silver certification in early 2005. The Early Learning Center child-care facility in RTP is also pursuing a LEED Silver rating.

EPA and GSA have been working together to acquire space for EPA's new 250,000-square-foot Region 8 Office in Denver, Colorado. As part of the procurement process, bidders were evaluated not only on their design and construction package, but also on their demonstrated performance in sustainable building principles. In August 2004, GSA awarded the development contract, and the winning team will be required to achieve the ENERGY STAR® building label and a minimum LEED Silver rating. In addition, the building will maximize water conservation through low-flow plumbing fixtures and water-conserving mechanical systems. The development team must also ensure resource conservation through the use of environmentally preferable construction materials and construction period recycling. The project should be completed and ready for occupancy in October 2006.

Office Buildings Are Energy Stars

Even though EPA does not own all of its office space, and in many instances is one tenant in a multi-tenant building, the Agency does whatever it can to ensure energy conservation in those buildings as well. In fact, any new leased office space is required to have or achieve the ENERGY STAR label after EPA occupancy. Office buildings that receive the ENERGY STAR label have performed in the top 25 percent of the office buildings in the country, from an energy use perspective.

Three EPA offices (in New York, Chicago, and Denver) had already received the ENERGY STAR label, and in 2004, EPA's Region 10 Office in the Park Place Building in Seattle, Washington, became the fourth. EPA occupies 10 of the facility's 21 floors. As part of a major renovation of its office space in 1999, EPA installed energy-efficient lighting fixtures and occupancy sensors that turn lights off in enclosed offices when unoccupied. The Agency also emphasized the use of natural light by limiting the number of offices on the perimeter, creating open work areas, and installing glass relights beside office doors.

The building owner, a private corporation, also provided additional high-efficiency lighting throughout Park Place and replaced the building's window-unit air conditioning system with a more efficient central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system. Thanks to these combined improvements, when Park Place was benchmarked through ENERGY STAR's national rating system, the facility performed in the top 25 percent of similar types of office buildings, earning the ENERGY STAR label in November 2004.

Two new regional office buildings underway in Boston and Denver and a new Headquarters satellite building under construction in Arlington, Virginia, will be required to achieve the ENERGY STAR label. Following a two-year re-commissioning effort, EPA's Region 4 Office in Atlanta also received the label in 2005. With the completion of these buildings, eight of EPA's largest office buildings will be ENERGY STAR-labeled facilities.



Sometimes facility upgrades can turn into environmental and energy savings opportunities as well. EPA's new main facility in RTP, for example, is subject to homeland security protection criteria, which require that exterior windows be able to withstand a 100-pound blast at a distance of 50 feet. To meet this new security standard, EPA chose to install protective mylar film over the building's existing windows. The film allows the windows to crack in the event of an explosion, but helps prevent glass from being projected into the building.

EPA recognized a potential energy savings benefit while examining the types of mylar film available for the project. The film is available in a number of tints; the darkest tint proved too reflective in the interior of the building, so a medium tint was selected. Now, in addition to meeting security standards, the tinted film shields the RTP facility's interior from the intense North Carolina sunshine, helping to stabilize cooling loads and reduce energy consumption. As a result, RTP is expected to save approximately \$100,000 in energy costs per year, with a pay-back period of six to 10 years.

CARDHOLDERS FIND "GREEN" PRODUCTS WITH EASE

With a decentralized purchasing system that allows buyers in offices across the country to purchase items online with an Agency credit card, how do you ensure that employees will "buy green"? In EPA's case, the Agency awarded a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) to office products company Corporate Express in October 2003, which ensures recycled-content and other environmentally preferable non-electronic products are available for purchase by EPA credit cardholders. In May 2004, EPA completed an Agencywide pilot phase-in of the voluntary BPA, but efforts are underway to make use of the agreement mandatory Agencywide in 2005.

Putting the LID on Stormwater

In urban areas, where EPA has a number of offices and facilities, impervious surfaces such as sidewalks and parking lots prevent stormwater from entering the soil, thus creating “runoff” that can contain pollutants. EPA’s stormwater management approach incorporates low-impact development (LID) strategies that aim to mimic the natural hydrological processes in order to reduce the environmental impact of stormwater runoff.

EPA Headquarters initiated an LID project in 2004 to manage urban stormwater runoff around the facilities that make up its Federal Triangle campus. The first phase of the project will redevelop a courtyard area to include bioretention cells, high-efficiency irrigation via an underground cistern, and porous pavement walkways, as well as a parking area that features bioretention cells and grass stabilization.





Although other agencies have instituted BPAs, EPA's comprises the federal government's most comprehensive list of green office products and will help divert tons of material from landfills, create markets for recyclables, and reduce natural resource depletion. In contrast with other federal BPAs, EPA's agreement complies not only with the federal Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) recycled content levels, but also incorporates several additional criteria, including EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program, the Agency's recycled paper policy, and Green Seal's Choose Green Report on Office Supplies. Common office supplies covered by the BPA include paper and paper products, paper clips, and remanufactured toner cartridges for computer printers and copiers.

EPA's use of a single vendor for the BPA also helps set this agreement apart. Corporate Express is the third largest supplier of office products to the U.S. government and has 90 percent of the Fortune 500 office supply market share. From October 2003 through March 2004, EPA and Corporate Express worked together to verify that products met the EPA Product-Specific Green Purchasing Criteria and develop EPA's tailored e-catalog, which provides employees with a one-stop shop for office supplies and allows them to easily determine environmental attributes. Corporate Express also developed a comprehensive training and support system to help EPA employees become comfortable with using the new procurement system, located at <www.epasupplies.com>.

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Use of a single vendor has also radically simplified EPA's tracking and management of office supply purchases and has allowed the Agency to take advantage of bulk discounts. Previously, EPA employees made purchases from a variety of sources, making it difficult for the Agency to track specific purchases and often forcing employees to hunt for environmental attributes. Information gathered through the BPA will allow EPA to establish a baseline against which it can measure future green purchasing progress. Since the BPA's inception, EPA customers have purchased more than 36,000 EPP items and more than 30,000 CPG items.



Now, the BPA's influence on environmental purchasing practices is reaching beyond EPA, helping educate other purchasers and vendors about the availability of and consumer market for environmentally preferable products. As a result of working with EPA, Corporate Express has placed icons in all of its paper and e-catalogs denoting products that meet EPP and/or EPA recycled content guidelines. The icons help Corporate Express' substantial public and private purchaser base easily identify and purchase green office supplies. The BPA is also spurring competition among vendors and creating a burgeoning market for environmentally sound supplies. Since the BPA was awarded to Corporate Express, several other office supply vendors have introduced green office supply catalogs and expanded their environmentally preferable offerings.

EPA HELPS AGENCIES FIND HOMES FOR OUTDATED ELECTRONICS

The U.S. government purchases approximately 7 percent of all the world's computers and disposes of more than 10,000 obsolete or unneeded computers per week. While computers have radically streamlined government operations and are now a key component of government infrastructure, disposing of obsolete or unneeded technology can have significant environmental impacts. Computers and other electronics contain toxic chemicals such as lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium, and beryllium that can negatively affect the environment if they are not properly disposed. Ever-changing technology can also lead to large amounts of obsolete equipment ending up in landfills or incinerators.

To ensure that the federal government's electronics disposal is conducted in a safe and environmentally preferable manner, EPA in 2004 created the Recycling Electronics and Asset Disposition (READ) program, which promotes reuse, recycling, and safe disposal of government computers through a multi-award contract. Through READ, EPA awarded five-year government-wide acquisition contracts (GWACs) to seven small businesses nationwide, which means any government agency can access an approved contractor to handle its obsolete computers and other electronics. Under the GWACs, these contractors are responsible for evaluat-



ing unneeded or obsolete equipment and its components, and determining how the equipment can be reused, refurbished, recycled, or, as a last resort, safely disposed. GWACs not only cover computers, but also fax machines, printers, copiers, shredders, scanners, mobile telephones, televisions, and other miscellaneous computer peripherals.

GWAC contractors collect, transport, inspect, and test unneeded government electronics. If equipment is still in marketable condition, the vendor will refurbish it, determine a fair market value, and resell or donate it to schools, non-profit organizations, or low-income families. Oftentimes, equipment is no longer usable, but contains individual components that can be resold. In this case, the vendor will disassemble the item and resell the usable components. Electronics and components that cannot be reused are either recycled or disposed of in an environmentally safe manner. The GWACs also ensure that government information stored in computers is adequately protected and that records are kept detailing how each piece of equipment is handled.

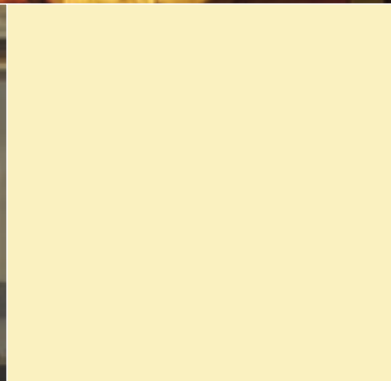
Through the READ GWAC program, EPA has high hopes for keeping federal electronics and their components out of landfills. READ's initial service goal is to recycle approximately 3,000 to 4,000 computers per week and steadily increase that number over the next five years as federal agencies become more familiar with the GWAC. EPA aims to achieve: a 10 percent annual increase in the ratio of recycled and/or reused items compared with the volume of electronics received; a 10 percent average annual increase in cost savings over the first three contract years; and a total of 30 agencies and/or departments taking part in the GWAC after the first three contract years.

Recycling Reigns in All the Regions

Electronics recycling is not a new concept at EPA; numerous regional offices collect compact disks, old cell phones, batteries, and even the packaging materials used to ship computers and other electronics. Electronics recycling is only one aspect of EPA's commitment to waste management and resource conservation. All EPA offices have standard recycling programs that collect mixed paper, newspapers, glass, plastic bottles, cans, and cardboard. Many go beyond the basics to include fluorescent light bulbs, toner cartridges, and "vermicomposting," or using worms to transform organic lunch scraps into nutrient-rich compost material.

One such facility is the Region 9 Office in San Francisco, California. In addition to an extensive recycling program, which goes well beyond traditional recyclables, the region has implemented several waste reduction strategies. Employees use duplex copiers and printers, e-forms, and a special software program to track and reduce paper use. The region also maintains an office supply "swap" area and uses a challenge/award program to recognize employees' waste reduction efforts.

Between its onsite recycling efforts and a contract with a waste management firm that sorts additional recyclables at a nearby recovery facility, the San Francisco office has reached a recycling rate of 90 percent—the Agency's highest. To share Region 9's success with other offices and find areas for improvement in all offices, EPA Headquarters initiated a regional recycling assessment program in 2004, completing visits to three different regional offices. The Agency also created a standard recycling operations manual, based on a successfully revamped Headquarters program, including model lease templates covering recycling program requirements, to assist regions with improving or setting up viable recycling programs in their buildings.



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SAFETY AND HEALTH

Recognizing that the Agency cannot fulfill its mission to protect human health and the environment if it does not protect its own employees, EPA makes safety and health a top concern of its Agencywide management approach. The mission of the Agency's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Division is to support EPA's mission by protecting its employees and assets and by minimizing its impact on the environment.

The Agency is working to ensure that one of its most important assets—personnel—are able to do their jobs in a safe and healthy environment. An environmental, safety, and health auditing and inspection program monitors Agency laboratories and offices across the country to ensure regulatory and policy compliance and implementation and use of sound management systems. Individual laboratory efforts ensure that employee safety as well as mission continuity are considered in facility decisions. Safety training helps workers do their jobs better, and a new emphasis on fitness makes employees' health a top priority.



TRAINING KEEPS TRAILERS SAFELY IN TOW

Protecting the environment and human health often requires EPA to transport a diverse array of equipment to locations throughout the United States. To help ensure the safe transport of EPA personnel and equipment—including mobile laboratories, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and boats—to their destinations, the Agency developed a two-part course designed to provide employees involved in equipment transport with the information necessary to safely tow a vehicle trailer.

Launched in FY 2004, the new course includes both a classroom presentation and a hands-on training session on an outdoor testing course. The initial presentation is designed to familiarize personnel with towing equipment used by EPA (including types of hitches and vehicle systems), as well as the specific skills and knowledge required to safely operate a vehicle-trailer combination. Following a review of proper loading and weight distribution techniques, participants learn how to properly maneuver a truck and trailer, how to handle emergency situations (e.g., skids or fires), and the importance of recognizing road hazards and weather conditions that might compromise the handling of the rig.

During the classroom session, participants also learn about trailering procedures specific to certain types of loads, such as how to safely launch and retrieve a boat from a boat ramp, and proper safety precautions for transporting mobile laboratories, which can contain hazardous chemicals, compressed gas cylinders, and unstable equipment.

Once the classroom session is completed, participants move to the driving course for a hands-on review of trailer and hitch types, followed by lessons in conducting a pre-trip safety inspection and maneuvering and parking the tow vehicle. Participants demonstrate what they have learned by navigating a loaded tow vehicle and trailer through the course. Practicing on the closed course allows participants to learn proper trailer handling under safe, controlled conditions.



PILOT PROGRAM, CENTERS HELP EMPLOYEES GET BACK ON TRACK TO FITNESS

Since its inception, EPA has been responsible for safeguarding the environment and human health. With the introduction in early 2005 of a National Wellness Pilot Program, EPA continues to implement comprehensive and innovative programs aimed at helping to safeguard its employees' health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of obesity in the United States has doubled since 1980, as people continue to exercise less and make poor nutritional choices. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and diabetes—all diseases associated with obesity—account for more than two-thirds of all deaths in the United States and significantly impact the lives of more than 100 million Americans. In the workplace, chronic medical problems caused by obesity reduce productivity and increase sick days and health care and disability costs. While not all instances of these and other diseases are preventable, their onset and impact often can be greatly reduced through conscientious lifestyle choices.

The President's HealthierUS Initiative is focused on improving the health of all Americans by encouraging them to be active every day, eat a healthy diet, obtain preventative health screenings, and make healthy lifestyle choices. Within the federal government, the HealthierUS Initiative requires each agency to establish a wellness program for its employees.

In support of the HealthierUS Initiative, EPA's National Wellness Pilot Program is educating EPA employees on ways to make improved lifestyle choices that will help them live longer and be healthier and happier.



Six EPA locations—laboratories in Athens, Georgia; Duluth, Minnesota; Cincinnati, Ohio; and RTP; and offices in Seattle, Washington, and Washington, D.C.—will participate in the Wellness Pilot Program. All employees at the pilot sites were invited to participate in cardiac risk assessments and an online health risk appraisal through the Department of Health and Human Service’s HealthyFocus4You program (www.foh.dhhs.gov/Public/ProductFocus/Nov2003/healthyfocus4you.asp).

Employees participating in the pilot may also participate in the “Lighten Up! With FOH” weight management and nutrition program (www.foh.dhhs.gov/Public/Productfocus/May04/lightenup.asp). The eight-week program, taught by a health professional, educates and motivates employees to achieve a healthy weight and make sound nutritional decisions as part of a long-term behavioral modification strategy, with the goal of a healthier lifestyle.

Employees Exercise Their Right to Fitness

Exercise is a key component to any health management program, and EPA is helping its employees get their daily exercise by providing fitness centers at many of its facilities, including laboratories in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Athens, Georgia; Cincinnati, Ohio; Duluth, Minnesota; Kansas City, Kansas; Narragansett, Rhode Island; and RTP, North Carolina, as well as regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, and San Francisco. For Headquarters employees, a new fitness center opened at EPA's 1310 L Street location in Washington, D.C., in 2004, joining the existing facilities at EPA's Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C., and Crystal Mall II offices in Northern Virginia.

Each center, which offers competitively priced fees, provides a variety of exercise equipment, fitness classes, and other activities. Following guidelines set by the American College of Sports Medicine, each center aims to provide employees with a safe environment for exercising and developing an effective fitness regimen.





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