

# What Every Nebraska Business Should Know About Environmental Permits



Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality  
Environmental Assistance Division  
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## Do you own a business?

Do you own a business or plan on starting a new business? Are you expanding, installing new equipment or making changes to your existing business? If so, you may need to apply for environmental permits issued by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ).

Permits are often required for facility construction, as well as water discharges and air emissions that exceed regulatory thresholds. Also, you will have to comply with regulations for handling your wastes.

Why? Because we want to protect our environment, and it is the law. By acquiring these permits you demonstrate your company's commitment to protecting the environment and being responsible citizens.



Yes, the permitting process can be complicated, but there is help! The NDEQ has numerous assistance resources available to help you determine what permits you need and the process for obtaining them. NDEQ also provides guidance on complying with environmental regulations.

Just call (402) 471-8697!

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## Why does NDEQ issue permits?

Nebraska has regulations designed to protect the environment, preserve natural resources, and safeguard the health of our citizens. NDEQ issues permits that specify environmental measures you must take to construct and operate your processes. During the permit application process, the NDEQ staff determines the impact of your process on the environment and establishes operating conditions that, if complied with, will ensure your process does not have an adverse impact on the environment. The permit will state conditions for operation of the process, reporting requirements, and pollution monitoring or testing requirements.



Ensuring your permit accurately reflects your process and that the permit conditions and limitations are appropriate relies on the quality of information you provide in your permit application. The permit application you submit must be complete, accurate, and timely. You or your staff can complete some of the applications; for others you may need to retain the services of a consultant. The NDEQ website ([www.deq.state.ne.us](http://www.deq.state.ne.us)) provides many of the permit applications you may need, guidance for completing them, and a Directory of Environmental Consultants and Engineers.

Visit [www.deq.state.ne.us](http://www.deq.state.ne.us)



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## Do I need a permit? When should I apply?

Due to complex environmental regulations, businesses that are existing, expanding, or new are encouraged to contact the NDEQ for help in determining what, if any, regulations you may need to comply with or permits you may need to apply for. Some permits must be obtained before starting most construction activities. There could be civil and criminal penalties for beginning construction before obtaining the necessary NDEQ permits.



Some common examples of processes and businesses that may require environmental permits include:

Automotive Repair & Maintenance Shops	Laboratories
Asphalt	Livestock Production
Auto Recycling	Manufacturing
Boilers	Mining Operations
Construction	Meat/Food Processing
Dehydrators	Painting
Dry Cleaning	Printing
Dryers	Restaurants
Fiberglass	Rock Crushing
Fuel Handling	Sand and Gravel
Grain Handling	Septic Systems
Incinerators	Water Treatment

Generally, any process that has the potential to emit gases, vapors, and/or particulate matter to the air, discharge wastewater to the environment, or produce solid or liquid wastes may need an environmental permit issued by the NDEQ, or may have other regulatory requirements.

## What are some examples of permits I may need?

Before construction activities begin, you may need to apply for one or more of the following permits or approvals:

- Air Quality Construction Permit
- Livestock Waste Control Facility Construction Approval
- Mineral Exploration Permit
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Storm Water Permit
- On-site Wastewater Treatment Construction Permit
- Solid Waste Compost Site Permit
- Underground Injection Control Permit
- Wastewater Facility Construction Permit

Before discharging wastewater from your facility you may need to apply for one of the following permits:

- Nebraska Pretreatment Permit
- NPDES Industrial Storm Water Permit
- On-site Wastewater Treatment Operating Permit
- Water Quality NPDES Permit

An additional permit which may be needed is:

- Air Quality Operating Permit

## How long will it take to get my permit?

The time from submittal of your application(s) to the issuance of the permit depends on the type of permit applied for, the complexity of your process(es), the completeness and accuracy of the submitted application, the number of applications ahead of yours, and issues that arise from the 30- to 60-day public notice and comment periods. You can keep the time required to obtain your permit to a minimum by contacting the NDEQ early in your planning process.



## What else should I know about?

In addition to permits, you may need to comply with regulations regarding the disposal of wastes; hazardous wastes; open burning; hazardous material storage; other programs not administered by the NDEQ such as the EPA Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan requirements; risk management plans; Toxics Release Inventories; and regulations pertaining to refrigerants.

A few of the other agencies that have environmental requirements you may need to address are the Nebraska Health and Human Services System, Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, State Fire Marshal's Office, and your local natural resources district.

## How do I find out more?

Unsure of what permits you need? The NDEQ One-Stop Permitting Assistance Program will get you to the right people and get your questions answered; all in one stop!

The One-Stop Permit Assistance program was established to serve as a clearinghouse for information related to the department's various permitting processes; bringing together appropriate staff to address your questions or concerns, and to ensure your inquiries receive a timely response. The one-stop program also coordinates activities with other state, federal or other assistance organizations and regulatory programs in an attempt to address questions and concerns in a comprehensive manner on your behalf.



For assistance, call the Small Business and Public Assistance Program Coordinator at (402) 471-8697, or email

[NDEQ.moreinfo@nebraska.gov](mailto:NDEQ.moreinfo@nebraska.gov).

## Questions?

Visit [www.deq.state.ne.us](http://www.deq.state.ne.us)